Master of Social Work (MSW) Student Handbook

Prepared by:
The Department of Social Work
Master of Social Work Program
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Virginia State University, Virginia 23806

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WELCOME AND INTRODUCTION

Welcome to Virginia State University and the Department of Social Work. This *Master of Social Work (MSW) Student Handbook* and Field Manual provide interested, prospective students or admitted students to the Graduate Program, all the information necessary to: understand program requirements and opportunities; students roles, rights, and responsibilities; and available services and support from the University and the Department of Social Work.

Learn more about Virginia State University, the Department of Social Work, and the profession of social work:

Read More – Learn More

* Review a timeline for the history of Virginia State University, and the Social Work Department.
* Consider a series of questions to help answer – Social Work: Is It for You?
* Discover that the social work program and profession involves more than a degree.
* Walk-thru the MSW application process and curriculum.
* Explore details about field education, including placements and supervision.
* Access range of policies, procedures, and guidelines involving the University, Social Work Department, and the Graduate Program.

For questions, comments, and suggestions about the MSW Program and profession of social work, contact: Dr. Jimmie Fedrick, Chair MSW Program –jfedrick@vsu.edu – 804 524 6276

About Virginia State University

1880 - 1882   VSU is founded on March 6, 1882, when legislature passes a bill to charter the Virginia Normal and Collegiate Institute. The bill is sponsored by Delegate Alfred W. Harris, a Black attorney whose offices are in Petersburg but who lives in and represents Dinwiddie County in the General Assembly.

1900 - 1902   The legislature revises the charter act to curtail the collegiate program and to change the name to Virginia Normal and Industrial Institute

The land-grant program for Blacks is moved from a private school, Hampton Institute.

1920 – 1923   The land-grant program for Blacks is moved from a private school, Hampton Institute, to Virginia Normal and Industrial Institute.

In 1923, the college program is restored.
The college's name changes to Virginia State College for Negroes.

1940 - 1946	The two-year branch in Norfolk joins the college. The parent school is renamed Virginia State College.
1950 - 1956	The Norfolk division officially becomes a four-year branch.
1960 - 1969	The Norfolk division gains independence as Norfolk State College.
1970 - 1979	The legislature passes a law that provides the present name: Virginia State University.
1980 - 1982	By now the university is fully integrated, with a student body of nearly 5,000 and a full-time faculty of about 250. The 236-acre campus also houses a library containing 200,000 books and 360,000 microform and non-print items, a 416-acre farm, and more than 50 buildings (including 15 dormitories and 16 classroom buildings), with a biennial budget of $31,000,000.
2010 - 2020	College Choice ranks VSU 12th out of 104 historically black colleges or universities (HBCUs) in America. VSU also places fifth in the nation as a top producer of teachers. HBCU Digest also names VSU's Department of Art and design as the Best Fine Arts Program in an HBCU. HBCU Digest recognizes VSU as the top HBCU, the Best Female Student, and the Best Board of Trustees.

Virginia State University was founded on March 6, 1882, when the legislature passed a bill to charter the Virginia Normal and Collegiate Institute.

The bill was sponsored by Delegate Alfred W. Harris, a Black attorney whose offices were in Petersburg, but who lived in and represented Dinwiddie County in the General Assembly. A hostile lawsuit delayed opening day for nineteen months, until October 1, 1883. In 1902, the legislature revised the charter act to curtail the collegiate program and to change the name to Virginia Normal and Industrial Institute.

In 1920, the land- grant program for Blacks was moved from a private school, Hampton Institute, where it had been since 1872, to Virginia Normal and Industrial Institute. In 1923 the college program was restored, and the name was changed to Virginia State College for Negroes in 1930. The two-year branch in Norfolk was added to the college in 1944; the Norfolk division became a four-year branch in 1956 and gained independence as Norfolk State College in 1969. Meanwhile, the parent school was renamed Virginia State College in 1946. Finally, the legislature passed a law in 1979 to provide the present name, Virginia State University.

Del. Alfred W. Harris

In the first academic year, 1883-84, the University had 126 students and seven faculty (all of them Black), one building, 33 acres, a 200-book library, and a $20,000 budget. By the centennial year of 1982, the University was fully

integrated, with a student body of nearly 5,000, a full-time faculty of about 250, a library containing 200,000 books and 360,000 microform and non-print items, a 236-acre campus and 416-acre farm, more than 50 buildings, including 15 dormitories and 16 classroom buildings, and a biennial budget of $31,000,000, exclusive of capital outlay.

The University is situated in Chesterfield County at Ettrick, on a bluff across the Appomattox River from the city of Petersburg. It is accessible via Interstate Highways 95 and 85, which meet in Petersburg. The University is only two and a half hours away from Washington, D.C. to the north, the Raleigh-Durham-Chapel Hill area to the southwest, and Charlottesville to the northwest.

Virginia Hall, Built 1883-88; Demolished 1937

Virginia State University has a long history of outstanding faculty and administration. The first person to bear the title of President, John Mercer Langston, was one of the best-known blacks of his day. Until 1992, he was the only black ever elected to the United States Congress from Virginia (elected in 1888), and he was the great-uncle of the famed writer Langston Hughes. From 1888 to 1968, four presidents - James H. Johnston, John M. Gandy, Luther H. Foster, and Robert P. Daniel served an average of 20 years, helping the school to overcome adversity and move forward.

For the next four decades, eight more presidents would lead the University to its current level of excellence including James F. Tucker, Wendell P. Russell, Walker H. Quarles, Jr., Thomas M. Law, Wilbert Greenfield, Wesley Cornelious McClure, Eddie N. Moore, Jr., Keith T. Miller, and Pamela V. Hammond .

First Graduating Class, 1886

On December 10, 2015, the Virginia State University Board of Visitors announced that Makola M. Abdullah, Ph.D. would become the 16th President of VSU

Dr. Makola Abdullah

The Social Work Program at Virginia State University's Department of Sociology, Social Work and Criminal Justice received full approval from the Virginia State Department of Education to reactivate the Bachelor of Social Work (BSW) degree beginning in the fall of 2008, focusing on generalist social work practice. Virginia State University Board of Visitors approved the Social Work Program as a stand-alone Department in November 2014. Highlights about the Department of Social Work and the undergraduate and proposed graduate program include:

About Virginia State University Department of Social Work

The Social Work Program at Virginia State University's Department of Sociology, Social Work and Criminal Justice received full approval from the Virginia State Department of Education to reactivate the Bachelor of Social Work (BSW) degree beginning in the fall of 2008, focusing on generalist social work practice. Virginia State University Board of Visitors approved the Social Work Program as a stand-alone Department in November 2014. Highlights about the Department of Social Work and the undergraduate and proposed graduate program include:

- ✓ Initial accreditation by the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE) in 2013
- ✓ The highest student retention rate at Virginia State University
- ✓ The BSW program has graduated more than 400 students over the span of ten years.
- ✓ Implementation of the Homefront Readjustment for the Armed Services undergraduate fully online certificate program.
- ✓ Masters of Social Work program approved by VSU Board of Visitors (2019), the Virginia State Council on Higher Education (SCHEV) (2020); and the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools Commission on Colleges (SACSCOC) (2020) for implementation of the MSW Program for face-to-face and online instruction delivery.

The Chair of the Department of Social Work is the Chief Administrative Officer. The Chair is appointed by the Dean of the College of Humanities and Social Sciences. The Graduate Program Director will provide direction to the MSW Program, including oversight of the Online MSW option. Others who provide administrative support to the Social Work Department Chair are the BSW Program Director, the Director of the BSW Program Field Education, the MSW Program, Director of MSW Program Field Education, and the Department Assessment Coordinator.

VSU Department of Social Work is committed to upholding the Social Work profession's commitment to promote social justice, economic stability, and the enhancement of the quality of

life for individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities in the central and southern Virginia region. The Department is further committed to continuing the HBCU heritage in the delivery and the pursuit of educational excellence by preparing culturally aware professional undergraduate and graduate level social workers.

The Social Work Department Mission Statement

The Department of Social Work at Virginia State University is dedicated to excellence in the education of professional social workers at the undergraduate and graduate levels. Both programs are committed to student-centeredness and active community engagement in the pursuit of social, economic and environmental justice. Therefore, the mission of the Department is to prepare competent social work professionals for generalist practice and advanced direct practice with individuals, families, groups, and organizations. In addition, the Department will provide regional leadership in the provision of professional development, service, consultation, and research to advance the well-being of the region served and will contribute to the expansion of social work knowledge.

The Social Work Department Position Statement on Discrimination
The Social Work Department is committed to creating a climate, which supports and encourages the personal and professional development of each student, with particular sensitivity to the diverse needs of students in the program. If a student thinks that he/she is the victim of prejudicial treatment or discrimination as provided in the University's Equal Opportunity Policy, the student may file a grievance, following the procedures outlined below:

> **Refer to:**
> Virginia State University Policy on Title IX
> Virginia State University Policy on Sex Discrimination (Sexual Misconduct)

Social Work: Is it For You?[1]

Social work is both a profession and a method of helping. Social work is a profession that dates from the late 19thCentury which works with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and the community in order to help people maximize their well-being through the identification of personal, interpersonal, and environmental concerns, needs, or problems, and to bring about the necessary change that will resolve, minimize, or prevent problems-in-living. The emphasis in this profession is not only on the solution or prevention of problems, but also on advancing social, economic, and environment justice while empowering others in order that they may act effectively on their own behalf. As a method of helping, social work is the purposeful, systematic, and disciplined use of the professional self to facilitate development and/or change in individuals and/or larger systems.

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[1] Adopted from Salisbury State University 2020-21 MSW Student Handbook and Field Manual.

Social work is concerned with ensuring the responsiveness and effectiveness of the social institutions to which we look for needed resources in life. Social workers are concerned with the interaction between people and their social environment and institutions. Social workers are also interested in societal conditions in their efforts to improve the quality of life for the people with whom they work.

In the final analysis, only you can really make the decision about whether you have what it takes to be a social worker and whether it is something you want to do. The following questions can assist you in deciding about social work as a major and personal profession. For further help in making a decision about whether you are the "social work type," seek out professional social workers in the community, students who are majoring in social work, and the social work faculty to discuss your interests and aptitudes.

1. Are you genuinely interested in people of all kinds? _____ Yes_____ No
   Social workers are committed to helping people regardless of racial, economic, cultural, and other differences. Prejudice does not fit with the values of the profession.

2. Do you believe in human potential for growth and change? _____ Yes_____ No
   It is important to have faith that everybody has some inner strength and that people can change, given the chance.

3. Do you have patience, perseverance, and the ability to follow through? _____ Yes_____ No
   The social worker should be hard to discourage, always resourceful in seeking new ways to help clients.

4. Do you work well with people? _____ Yes_____ No
   Social workers need to get along with clients, colleagues and other professional workers. The ability to resolve conflicts is essential for effective social work practice.

5. Are you interested in your own personal growth and well-being? _____ Yes_____ No
   Social workers must be aware of their own values, beliefs, and biases and their own struggles so they do not get "mixed up" with the client's troubles. Social workers must be willing to know themselves and take care of themselves.

6. Are you interested in developing your problem-solving abilities? _____ Yes_____ No
   An interest in what makes people tick, in keeping posted on what's happening in the world each day, picking out key facts in a stack of data, and taking responsibility and making important decisions are important criteria for social workers.

7. Are you interested in the larger picture? _____ Yes_____ No
   A social worker cares about the state of the nation and of the world, sees each human problem in its relationship to the whole community, and addresses social and economic inequality by working for better housing, health services, schools, and wages.

8. Are you interested in using scientific methods to work with people? _____ Yes_____ No
A social worker bases their practice on established social work methods and uses scientific studies when possible.

9. Are you willing to accept people's differences and able to withhold judgment and bias? _____ Yes_____ No
A social worker values the dignity of all individuals and avoids blaming people for their circumstances.

If you answered yes to most of these questions, then you will find social work a challenging and interesting career.

Other key considerations about the social work profession are the guiding Code of Ethics and social workers as mandated reporters.

Learn More About the NASW Code of Ethics
Access at: https://www.socialworkers.org/About/Ethics/Code-of-Ethics

Social Work: A Code of Ethics

Social workers adhere to a professional code of ethics as defined by the National Association of Social Workers (NASW), the social work profession's primary association. A summary of the major principles of that code are:

1. The Social Worker's Conduct and Comportment as a Social Worker
   - *Propriety*
     The social worker should maintain high standards of personal conduct in the capacity or identity as social worker.
   - *Competence and Professional Development*
     The social worker should strive to become and remain proficient in professional practice and performance of professional functions.
   - *Service*
     The social worker should regard as primary the service obligation of the social work profession.
   - *Integrity*
     The social worker should act in accordance with the highest standards of professional integrity.
   - *Scholarship and Research*
     The social worker engaged in study and research should be guided by the conventions of scholarly inquiry.

2. The Social Worker's Ethical Responsibility to Clients
   - *Primacy of Client's Interests*
   The social worker's primary responsibility is to clients.
   - *Rights and Prerogatives of Clients*
   The social worker should make every effort to foster maximum self-determination on the part of clients.
   - *Confidentiality of Privacy*
   The social worker should respect the privacy of clients and hold in confidence all information obtained in the course of professional service.
   - *Fees*
   When setting fees, the social worker should ensure that they are fair, reasonable, considerate, and commensurate with the service performed and with due regard for the client's ability to pay.

3. The Social Worker's Responsibility to Colleagues
   - *Respect, Fairness, and Courtesy*
   The social worker should treat colleagues with respect, courtesy, fairness, and good faith.
   - *Dealing with Colleagues' Clients*
   The social worker has the responsibility to relate to the clients of colleagues with full professional consideration.

4. The Social worker's Ethical Responsibility to Employing Organizations
   - *Commitments to Employing Organizations*
   The social worker should uphold and advance the values, ethics, knowledge, and mission of the profession.

5. The Social Worker's Ethical Responsibility to the Social Work Profession
   - *Maintain the Integrity of the Profession*
   The social worker should uphold and advance the values, ethics, knowledge, and mission of the profession.
   - *Community Service*
   The social worker should assist the profession in making social services available to the general public.
   - *Development of Knowledge*
   The social worker should take responsibility for identifying, developing, and fully utilizing knowledge for professional practice.

6. The Social Worker's Ethical Responsibility to Society
   - *General Welfare*
   The social worker should promote the general welfare of society.

Mandated Reporters

Throughout coursework and field placements, and every day as a Social Work Professional, there will be an emphasis on mandated reporting and mandated reporters. Mandated reporters are persons who, in the course of their work, may be privy to information that they are required to report to the appropriate enforcement agency. Social workers in the state of Virginia are mandated reporters and must report any disclosure of suspected incidents of child abuse and neglect, including child sexual abuse, even if information was disclosed indirectly through a classmate, colleague, or friend/family member. This includes adults who disclose that they were sexually assaulted as a child, commonly referred to as an Adults Molested as Children (AMAC). Virginia State University social work faculty and staff are required to report any suspected incidents of child abuse and neglect, whether or not the suspected incident was previously reported. Therefore, any disclosure (written or verbal) by students or prospective students of suspected incidents of child abuse and/or neglect will be immediately reported to the appropriate authorities.

It is the policy of Virginia State University (VSU) to comply with Title IX of the Education Amendments of 1972 (Title IX), which protects individuals from discrimination based on sex in any VSU educational program or activity. Any form of sex discrimination (which includes acts of sexual harassment, sexual assault and sexual violence) is prohibited by Title IX. Retaliation for asserting claims of sex discrimination is also prohibited under VSU policies and Title IX. If a student experiences discrimination, the student is encouraged to report the incident to the Title IX Coordinator. Learn more about student rights and options at https://www.vsu.edu/counseling/sexual-assault/index.php or call 804 524 5939. Students may also contact the Counseling Center, a confidential resource, for support related to sexual assault or power-based personal violence at 804 524 5411 (24-hour helpline), or visit https://www.vsu.edu/counseling/index.php/.

In situations where the Title IX Coordinator becomes involved in the resolution of complaints, assistance to students who need help with academics, housing, or other issues is available.

I   THE SOCIAL WORK PROFESSION

Social Work is more than academics and adhering to a Code of Ethics. To be considered and hired as a social worker in the Virginia, candidates must:

- ✓ Graduate with a degree in social work from an accredited college or university (curriculum includes a field practicum). The accrediting body is the Council of Social Work Education.

- ✓ Apply for, take, and pass a social work licensure exam through the process that is managed by the Virginia Board of Social Work. The licensure exam itself is taken through the Association of Social Work Boards (ABSW).

NOTE: Most states require social work licensing through licensure exams. Students interested in practice outside of Virginia should contact the Licensing Board or State Chapter of the National Association of Social Workers (NASW) for the particular state for more information.

Social Work Professionals: Education, Licensing, and Career Path Options

Examples of education, licensing, and career path options include:

BSW	LBSW	The LBSW is a *case management* license applicable to Bachelors of Social Work (BSW) degree applicants. This license is not a prerequisite for clinical licensure.
		Note: (limited career opportunities)
MSW	LMSW	The LMSW is a *case management* license applicable to Masters of Social Work (MSW) degree applicants. This license is not a prerequisite for clinical licensure.
		Note: (Clinical with supervision or non-clinical)
MSW	LCSW	The Licensed Clinical Social Worker (LCSW) is a *clinical* license to practice at the autonomous level. This license is applicable to MSW degree applicants with supervised post-master's degree experience. Supervised post-master's degree experience is a prerequisite for clinical licensure.
		Note: (Clinical – [including private practice] or non-Clinical)

Key:
BSW: Bachelor of Social Work
MSW: Master of Social Work
LBSW: Licensed Bachelor of Social Worker
LMSW: Licensed Master of Social Worker
LCSW: Licensed Clinical Social Worker

National Association of Social Workers

The National Association of Social Workers (NASW) provides information about the social work profession, a newsletter that discusses current events from a social work perspective, job announcements, continuing education opportunities and professional journals. In addition to the National association, there are State chapters.

Members are eligible for reduced rates at conferences and on fees for liability insurance, options for life insurance, and other resources and services. In addition to receiving NASW information, members also receive local chapter information.

Students are encouraged to join while they are still in school to take advantage of reduced membership rates-reduced rates continue post-graduation for students who enroll while still in school.

Students who are not members may still attend local chapter meetings and continuing education programs that are often on the School of Social Work and Club bulletin boards as an opportunity to meet others in the profession.

National Association of Black Social Workers

The National Association of Black Social Workers, Inc., comprised of people of African ancestry, is committed to enhancing the quality of life and empowering people of African ancestry through advocacy, human services delivery, and research.

Student Chapter Membership:

You are affiliated with NABSW by way of a student chapter at a college or university. You must be an enrolled student at the college/university for which you are a chapter member. Student chapters often hold meetings, host events, and are active in their respective colleges/universities and communities. Each student chapter has voting privileges at our quarterly and national meetings.

For Further Information

The following information, about agencies, organizations, and associations, is provided to assist in learning more about the social work profession:

Agency, Organization, Association	Contact Information
Association of Social Work Boards (ASWB)	www.aswb.org
Council on Social Work Education (CSWE)	www.cswe.org
Virginia Board of Social Work	https://www.dhp.virginia.gov/social/
National Association of Social Work (NASW)	https://www.socialworkers.org/
National Association of Social Work – Virginia (NASW-VA)	https://www.naswva.org/
National Association of Black Social Workers (NABSW)	https://www.nabsw.org/
Richmond Association of Black Social Workers (RABSW)	https://richmondabsw.org

II   THE MASTER OF SOCIAL WORK (MSW) PROGRAM

The Master of Social Work Program is designed to inform students about advanced direct practice with individuals, families, groups and organizations. Classes will be conducted in face-to-face and online models of delivery. Field instruction will be provided by social service,

behavioral health agencies and hospitals throughout the region and will offer students the 'hands on' supervised clinical experience necessary to develop the required skills. Virginia State graduates are highly regarded by the social service and behavioral health communities.

Master of Social Work (MSW) Program Mission Statement

"The mission of the Virginia State University MSW Program is committed to the development of culturally competent, ethical, empathetic and skilled professionals who identifies with the social work profession, recognize, support, and build on the strengths and resiliency of all human beings, and dedicated to advanced social work practice and leadership roles within social service agencies, educational, health and behavioral health agencies, organizations and institutions. The program has a major focus of preparing its graduates to address, systematically and strategically, the well-being of traumatized individuals and the promotion of human rights, social and economic justice through community engagement, advocacy, and collaborative scientific inquiry and the impact on professional practice locally, nationally and globally."

MSW Program Goals

Goal I: Prepare students to practice autonomously as advanced level trauma-informed professionals within a wide range of client systems and practice settings that support and build on the strengths and resiliency of all human beings.

Goal II: Prepare students to embrace the strength of diversity, practice cultural humility and be able to conduct culturally effective practice interventions at the micro, mezzo, and macro levels.

Goal III: Prepare students to pursue ongoing professional development to acquire the essential leadership skills that cultivate ethical and competent social work practice across all social work systems, locally, nationally and globally.

Goal IV: Prepare students to apply critical thinking skills to become proactive change agents and advocates in response to the impact of social, economic and environmental factors on professional social work practice locally, internationally and globally.

Goal V: Prepare students to competently utilize evidence-based and best-practices to inform and evaluate the effectiveness of their practice and use program evaluation results to improve trauma-informed service outcomes for clients and the impact on professional practice.

Generalist Practice

The Social Work Department frame the programmatic definition of generalist practice from the Council on Social Work Education (2015) which states:

> *Generalist practice is grounded in the liberal arts and the person-in-environment framework. To promote human and social well-being, generalist practitioners use a range of prevention and intervention methods in their practice with diverse individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities based on scientific inquiry and best practices. The generalist practitioner identifies with the social work profession and*

applies ethical principles and critical thinking in practice at the micro, mezzo, and macro levels. Generalist practitioners engage diversity in their practice and advocate for human rights and social and economic justice. They recognize, support, and build on the strengths and resiliency of all human beings. They engage in research-informed practice and are proactive in responding to the impact of context on professional practice. (p.11)

When the MSW curriculum was being developed between 2016 and 2019, an ongoing curriculum discussion, this definition of generalist practice helped frame the discussion. As the Department of Social Work moved from program objectives to a competency-based curriculum, conversations centered on outlining the specific knowledge, values, skills, and cognitive and affective processes needed to practice as a generalist social worker in today's world along with exploring innovative ways in which to help develop those aptitudes.

Generalist Practice Social Work Competencies

The Virginia State University social work curriculum prepares its graduates as entry-level generalist social workers with practice grounded in the core competencies and practice behaviors of generalist practice. The nine core competencies outlined by the Council on Social Work Education (2015) are listed below, and are followed by a description of characteristic knowledge, values, skills, and cognitive and affective processes expected at the generalist practice level. Also included is a list of the behaviors that operationalize our generalist practice curriculum.

Competency 1: Demonstrate Ethical and Professional Behavior

Social workers understand the value base of the profession and its ethical standards, as well as relevant laws and regulations that may impact practice at the micro, mezzo, and macro levels. Social workers understand frameworks of ethical decision-making and how to apply principles of critical thinking to those frameworks in practice, research, and policy arenas. Social workers recognize personal values and the distinction between personal and professional values. They also understand how their personal experiences and affective reactions influence their professional judgment and behavior. Social workers understand the profession's history, its mission, and the roles and responsibilities of the profession. Social Workers also understand the role of other professions when engaged in inter-professional teams. Social workers recognize the importance of life-long learning and are committed to continually updating their skills to ensure they are relevant and effective. Social workers also understand emerging forms of technology and the ethical use of technology in social work practice. *Social workers:*

- make ethical decisions by applying the standards of the NASW Code of Ethics, relevant laws and regulations, models for ethical decision-making, ethical conduct of research, and additional codes of ethics as appropriate to context;
- use reflection and self-regulation to manage personal values and maintain professionalism in practice situations;
- demonstrate professional demeanor in behavior; appearance; and oral, written, and electronic communication;
- use technology ethically and appropriately to facilitate practice outcomes; and• use supervision and consultation to guide professional judgment and behavior.

Competency 2: Engage Diversity and Difference in Practice
Social workers understand how diversity and difference characterize and shape the human experience and are critical to the formation of identity. The dimensions of diversity are understood as the intersectionality of multiple factors including but not limited to age, class, color, culture, disability and ability, ethnicity, gender, gender identity and expression, immigration status, marital status, political ideology, race, religion/spirituality, sex, sexual orientation, and tribal sovereign status. Social workers understand that, as a consequence of difference, a person's life experiences may include oppression, poverty, marginalization, and alienation as well as privilege, power, and acclaim. Social workers also understand the forms and mechanisms of oppression and discrimination and recognize the extent to which a culture's structures and values, including social, economic, political, and cultural exclusions, may oppress, marginalize, alienate, or create privilege and power. *Social workers:*
- apply and communicate understanding of the importance of diversity and difference in shaping life experiences in practice at the micro, mezzo, and macro levels;
- present themselves as learners and engage clients and constituencies as experts of their own experiences; and
- apply self-awareness and self-regulation to manage the influence of personal biases and values in working with diverse clients and constituencies

Competency 3: Advance Human Rights and Social, Economic, and Environmental Justice
Social workers understand that every person regardless of position in society has fundamental human rights such as freedom, safety, privacy, an adequate standard of living, health care, and education. Social workers understand the global interconnections of oppression and human rights violations, and are knowledgeable about theories of human need and social justice and strategies to promote social and economic justice and human rights. Social workers understand strategies designed to eliminate oppressive structural barriers to ensure that social goods, rights, and responsibilities are distributed equitably and that civil, political, environmental, economic, social, and cultural human rights are protected. *Social workers:*
- apply their understanding of social, economic, and environmental justice to advocate for human rights at the individual and system levels; and
- engage in practices that advance social, economic, and environmental justice.

Competency 4: Engage in Practice-informed Research and Research-informed Practice
Social workers understand quantitative and qualitative research methods and their respective roles in advancing a science of social work and in evaluating their practice. Social workers know the principles of logic, scientific inquiry, and culturally informed and ethical approaches to building knowledge. Social workers understand that evidence that informs practice derives from multi-disciplinary sources and multiple ways of knowing. They also understand the processes for translating research findings into effective practice. Social workers:
- use practice experience and theory to inform scientific inquiry and research;
- apply critical thinking to engage in analysis of quantitative and qualitative research methods and research findings; and
- use and translate research evidence to inform and improve practice, policy, and service delivery.

Competency 5: Engage in Policy Practice

Social workers understand that human rights and social justice, as well as social welfare and services, are mediated by policy and its implementation at the federal, state, and local levels. Social workers understand the history and current structures of social policies and services, the role of policy in service delivery, and the role of practice in policy development. Social workers understand their role in policy development and implementation within their practice settings at the micro, mezzo, and macro levels and they actively engage in policy practice to effect change within those settings. Social workers recognize and understand the historical, social, cultural, economic, organizational, environmental, and global influences that affect social policy. They are also knowledgeable about policy formulation, analysis, implementation, and evaluation.

Social workers:
- Identify social policy at the local, state, and federal level that impacts well-being, service delivery, and access to social services;
- assess how social welfare and economic policies impact the delivery of and access to social services;
- apply critical thinking to analyze, formulate, and advocate for policies that advance human rights and social, economic, and environmental justice

Competency 6: Engage with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities

Social workers understand that engagement is an ongoing component of the dynamic and interactive process of social work practice with, and on behalf of, diverse individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities. Social workers value the importance of human relationships. Social workers understand theories of human behavior and the social environment, and critically evaluate and apply this knowledge to facilitate engagement with clients and constituencies, including individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities. Social workers understand strategies to engage diverse clients and constituencies to advance practice effectiveness. Social workers understand how their personal experiences and affective reactions may impact their ability to effectively engage with diverse clients and constituencies. Social workers value principles of relationship-building and inter-professional collaboration to facilitate engagement with clients, constituencies, and other professionals as appropriate. Social workers:
- apply knowledge of human behavior and the social environment, person-in-environment, and other multidisciplinary theoretical frameworks to engage with clients and constituencies; and
- use empathy, reflection, and interpersonal skills to effectively engage diverse clients and constituencies

Competency 7: Assess Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities

Social workers understand that assessment is an ongoing component of the dynamic and interactive process of social work practice with, and on behalf of, diverse individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities. Social workers understand theories of human behavior and the social environment, and critically evaluate and apply this knowledge in the assessment of diverse clients and constituencies, including individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities. Social workers understand methods of assessment with diverse clients and

constituencies to advance practice effectiveness. Social workers recognize the implications of the larger practice context in the assessment process and value the importance of inter-professional collaboration in this process. Social workers understand how their personal experiences and affective reactions may affect their assessment and decision-making. Social workers:

- collect and organize data, and apply critical thinking to interpret information from clients and constituencies;
- apply knowledge of human behavior and the social environment, person-in-environment, and other multidisciplinary theoretical frameworks in the analysis of assessment data from clients and constituencies;
- develop mutually agreed-on intervention goals and objectives based on the critical assessment of strengths, needs, and challenges within clients and constituencies; and
- select appropriate intervention strategies based on the assessment, research knowledge, and values and preferences of clients and constituencies

Competency 8: Intervene with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities

Social workers understand that intervention is an ongoing component of the dynamic and interactive process of social work practice with, and on behalf of, diverse individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities. Social workers are knowledgeable about evidence-informed interventions to achieve the goals of clients and constituencies, including individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities. Social workers understand theories of human behavior and the social environment, and critically evaluate and apply this knowledge to effectively intervene with clients and constituencies. Social workers understand methods of identifying, analyzing and implementing evidence-informed interventions to achieve client and constituency goals. Social workers value the importance of inter-professional teamwork and communication in interventions, recognizing that beneficial outcomes may require interdisciplinary, inter-professional, and inter-organizational collaboration. *Social workers*:

- critically choose and implement interventions to achieve practice goals and enhance capacities of clients and constituencies;
- apply knowledge of human behavior and the social environment, person-in-environment, and other multidisciplinary theoretical frameworks in interventions with clients and constituencies;
- use inter-professional collaboration as appropriate to achieve beneficial practice outcomes;
- negotiate, mediate, and advocate with and on behalf of diverse clients and constituencies; and• facilitate effective transitions and endings that advance mutually agreed-on goals.

Competency 9: Evaluate Practice with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities

Social workers understand that evaluation is an ongoing component of the dynamic and interactive process of social work practice with, and on behalf of, diverse individuals, families, groups, organizations and communities. Social workers recognize the importance of evaluating processes and outcomes to advance practice, policy, and service delivery effectiveness. Social workers understand theories of human behavior and the social environment, and critically

evaluate and apply this knowledge in evaluating outcomes. Social workers understand qualitative and quantitative methods for evaluating outcomes and practice effectiveness. *Social workers*:

- select and use appropriate methods for evaluation of outcomes;
- apply knowledge of human behavior and the social environment, person-in-environment, and other multidisciplinary theoretical frameworks in the evaluation of outcomes;
- critically analyze, monitor, and evaluate intervention and program processes and outcomes; and
- apply evaluation findings to improve practice effectiveness at the micro, mezzo, and macro levels.

The MSW program generalist practice curriculum is designed to provide all incoming master's students a common core of values, knowledge, and skills that undergird social work competencies for social work practice with individuals, families, groups, communities and - systems. The goal is to provide all students with a sound, broad base for further student in the specialized area of practice.

Specialized Practice

Specialized practice builds on generalist practice as described in EP 2.0, adapting and extending the Social Work Competencies for practice with a specific population, problem area, method of intervention, perspective or approach to practice. Specialized practice augments and extends social work knowledge, values, and skills to engage, assess, intervene, and evaluate within an area of specialization. Specialized practitioners advocate with and on behalf of clients and constituencies in their area of specialized practice. Specialized practitioners synthesize and employ a broad range of interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary knowledge and skills based on scientific inquiry and best practices, and consistent with social work values. Specialized practitioners engage in and conduct research to inform and improve practice, policy, and service delivery. The master's program in social work prepares students for specialized practice. Programs identify the specialized knowledge, values, skills, cognitive and affective processes, and behaviors that extend and enhance the nine Social Work Competencies and prepare students for practice in the area of specialization.

Trauma Informed Social Work Practice [2]

Competency for trauma-informed social work advanced practice includes the ability to intervene with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities in the practice, research, and policy context. Trauma-informed social work education aims to prepare students through research and best practice standards when working with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities. Standards for competent practice in response to trauma are an ethical obligation of the profession, because the likelihood of encountering survivors of trauma in every practice setting is very high. Additionally, trauma-informed social work education recognizes the importance for students to understand the impact of the work on self, colleagues, the organization, and the system. Understanding the impact of secondary traumatic stress,

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[2] Specialized Practice Curricular Guide for Trauma-Informed Social Work Practice. 2015 EPAS Curricular Guide Resource Series. Council on Social Work Education 2018.

vicarious traumatization, vicarious resilience, and posttraumatic growth is critical to professional growth and development.

The intersections of age, class, color, culture, disability and ability, ethnicity, gender, gender identity and expression, immigration status, marital status, political ideology, race, religion and spirituality, sex, sexual orientation, and tribal sovereign status add to the inherently complex impact of trauma expo-sure. These contextual factors contribute to the disproportionate exposure to greater socioeconomic inequalities experienced by the individuals and families that social workers encounter in all the service settings in which they work. The combined impact of disproportionate exposure to current trauma and experiences of historical trauma, marginalization, racism, and oppression shapes the perceptions of the children and families, cultural groups, and the broader systems they live in to trauma exposure and intervention efforts. This particularly affects help seeking and access to effective services.

A reciprocal interaction also exists between social, political, and legal systems and the individuals and families traumatized. It affects the systems' capacity to respond effectively to the needs of affected individuals or families and the capacity of the systems themselves to adjust and recover. Inequities embedded in these systems lead to accumulated disadvantages in access to tangible and intangible sources of social support. The resulting inequality con-tributes to the overrepresentation of individuals who are traumatized among the populations affected by major social problems, such as homelessness, substance abuse, low educational attainment, joblessness, and chronic poor health.

Trauma-informed social workers recognize the following:

- **Trauma and traumatic experiences are inherently complex.**
  Trauma occurs in a broad context that includes individuals' personal characteristics, life experiences, and current circumstances. Intrinsic and extrinsic factors influence individuals' experience and appraisal of traumatic events; expectations regarding danger, protection, and safety; and the course of post trauma adjustment.

- **Trauma recovery is possible but presents specific challenges.**
  Traumatic experiences often constitute a major violation of the expectations of the child, family, community, and society regarding the primary social roles and responsibilities of influential figures in the client's life. These life figures may include family members, teachers, peers, adult mentors, and agents of social institutions such as judges, police officers, health-care and behavioral health-care providers, and child welfare workers. Practitioners are aware of the need to contend with issues involving justice, legal redress, and protection against further harm. In addition, working with trauma-exposed clients can evoke distress in providers that makes it more difficult for them to provide good care. Proper professional development and self-care are important parts of providing high-quality care and of sustaining personal and professional resources and capacities over time (National Child Traumatic Stress Network, 2012).

- **Trauma informs organizational practice.**
  Whether or not it is recognized, trauma shapes the organizational culture of all service-providing systems. Competent social work organizational practice reflects the U.S. Substance

Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA, 2014) statement that "trauma-informed organizations, programs, and services are based on an understanding of the vulnerabilities or triggers of trauma survivors that traditional service delivery approaches may exacerbate, so that these services and programs can be more supportive and avoid re-traumatization." Trauma-informed systems also consider the profound impact that working with and caring for traumatized clients can have on workers and caregivers and provide support to mitigate these effects.

According to Walsh (2013), direct practice is the application of theory to resolve and prevent psychosocial problems within the context of social work values, empowerment, diversity, and client strengths. The theoretical stance in the trauma informed advanced practice specialization supports the strengths perspective along with a diverse and multi-culturally sensitive approach to practice, thus building on a generalist practice perspective. This specialized practice model primarily focuses on direct client intervention (including assessment and evaluation) and system linkage. This is different from the generalist curriculum in that in the generalist curriculum students focus on a broader practice perspective including all levels of client systems (micro, mezzo, macro), as well as research methods for evaluating practice. The trauma-informed specialization builds on these areas as students focus more intensely to develop skills for working in direct practice with individuals, families, groups, and organizations, and expands to include program evaluation. MSW graduates will be prepared to carry out primary roles that include caseworker, group worker, family counselor/therapist, mediator, advocate, case manager/coordinator, supervisor, and administrator/manager. The trauma-informed specialization embodies skills as described by Corcoran (2010) in her text Direct Practice in Social Work by focusing on advancing the development of personal awareness, knowledge of social work values and ethics, sensitivity to social diversity, and promotion of social justice.

This conceptual framework for social work education and the trauma-informed practice specialization was built on five basic foundations or premises. The first is the purpose of social work and social work education, the second is the belief in the value of social work competence, the third relates to the program's values stance, the fourth is the Department of Social Work understanding of the interdisciplinary and multidisciplinary knowledge base required to do trauma-informed practice, and finally fifth is the requisite skills that practitioners' need to exhibit to be competent and effective.

- The *first* premise, the *purpose of social work*, is articulated by the Council of Social Work Education's (CSWE) Education Policy statement. The MSW program is consistent with and supports CSWE's statements on purpose, which acts as a guide in the development of the program. To achieve these purposes, there is a clearly delineated generalist practice curriculum base for first year graduate students (described in detail in AS 2.0) and an advanced direct practice specialization curriculum that builds on generalist practice and is based on scientific inquiry, promotes human well-being, and is guided by a person in the environment perspective, respect for human diversity, quest for social and economic justice, and prevention of conditions that limit human rights.
- The *second* premise involves demonstrating *social work competence*. Using a competency-based approach is consistent with CSWE's Education Policy model which incorporates

experiential constructs and recognizes the significance of cognitive, affective, and behavioral processes as part of adult learning. This outcome oriented specialized practice curriculum exemplifies the "learning through seeing, hearing, and doing" pedagogical approach instrumental in integrating learning and practice. This builds on the generalist curriculum in a fundamental way. While similar pedagogy is used in generalist practice, when students complete the generalist curriculum, they have the knowledge and skills requisite to first order change, which is change that brings relief from the presenting situation or problem but does not change existing structures or the beliefs affecting change. Students completing the specialization demonstrate second order change and go beyond focusing on symptomatic relief to interventions that are more likely to be transformative in impact. That is, second order change is planned or strategic and substantive in nature, a "change to the structure of the system" (Davey, et al. 2012, p. 77). Thus, in the advanced curriculum, competence is demonstrated through actually carrying out assessment and intervention with client systems, including integrating theory and developing theory-based intervention plans designed to effect substantive change.

- The *third* premise in the conceptual framework is the role of *values*. Values are pivotal to the individual and the program's identity and guide everything from assessment to termination to evaluation. The program embraces the core values of the dignity and worth of the person, diversity, the importance of human relations, service, social and economic justice, and competence in practice. Students are taught that globally there are different values that underlie the conceptual frameworks for practice elsewhere depending on the political/economic contexts of individual countries. Also, intrinsically linked to values is the issue of ethics. Through the curriculum, students learn that professional practice is replete with ethical dilemmas, including tension at the individual level between self-determination and confidentiality, tension at the family level between individual versus family needs, and discord at the organizational level between the good of an individual client and agency policy. In the generalist practice curriculum, students become familiar with the ethical standards and values. In the specialized practice curriculum, students gain self-awareness of their values and biases and grapple with ethical dilemmas impacted by their values stance and the importance of managing biases in practice. Demonstrating ethical and professional behavior is not only a social work competency, but an inherent expectation of all practitioners, generalist and specialists.

- The *fourth* premise is the role of *knowledge*. In this conceptual framework, knowledge begins with the liberal arts base in generalist practice, with focus on the social and biological sciences as the foundations of understanding human and social behavior. Social work has always been a consumer of the "how" and "why" knowledge produced by the sciences. The liberal arts base provides a "knowledge foundation" for the generalist practice curriculum. The development of practice knowledge within the program starts with the requirements of generalist practice and proceeds through the specialization curriculum. Effective generalist practice requires mastery of knowledge based on a systematized eclecticism of knowledge that enables the practitioner to carry out several professional roles.

- The *final* premise of this conceptual framework is *skill development*. As with knowledge, the development of skills competency happens hierarchically. As a generalist practitioner, it is

expected that students demonstrate a range of generalist skills that support the implementation of the planned change process. These skills at the generalist practice level include: collect data; plan and contract; intervene and monitor; and deal with termination. At the specialized practice level, these skills include: interpretation, clarification, probing in more depth, negotiation, confrontation; mediation, facilitation as well as engagement in other roles as needed.

At the generalist level, the learning expectations focus primarily on the first three levels of Bloom's taxonomy of learning: Knowledge (recalling), Comprehension (understanding), and Application (solving). In the advanced direct practice specialization, the knowledge base of the conceptual framework begins with generalist practice and branches into five areas of advanced study, beginning with advanced practice with individuals, then moving to advanced practice with groups and families, and ending with practice evaluation and administration/supervision (i.e. advanced practice with organizations). Study at this level focuses more on Bloom's higher levels of learning: Analysis (examining), Synthesis (creating), and Evaluation (judging) as students learn to address second order change, or changing the structure of the system, as described previously. In the specialization, the role of intervention theories is to provide guidance to the assessment and intervention strategy. In therapeutic terms, the goal of second order change at the individual level might be to disrupt the pattern of symptomatic interactions so that they cease, or at the family level to alter dysfunctional interaction patterns, or in an organization to reorient the organization to be more effective.

The theoretical basis of the specialization focuses on evidence-based theories and models that underpin and support the trauma-informed advanced practice focus. The theory base in the trauma-informed specialization supports the strengths perspective along with a diverse and multi-culturally sensitive approach to practice. This approach incorporates a strengths oriented and risk and resilience framework that work in tandem to provide a strong curriculum based on values, strengths, multiculturalism, and empowerment. The theoretical basis for the specialization begins in the generalist curriculum with the ecosystems and strengths perspective and expands in the specialization to more in-depth practice theory focused on second order change. The specialization is guided by assessment of strengths, risks, and protective factors as a common thread through the advanced practice sequence, along with multicultural approach to working with clients on all system level.

Trauma Informed Specialized Social Work Practice: Competencies & Behaviors

Competency 1: Demonstrate Ethical and Professional Behavior
Trauma-informed social workers recognize and demonstrate the key characteristics of trauma-informed practice. They adhere to the ethical responsibility to represent themselves as competent only within the boundaries of their education, training, supervised experience, or other relevant professional experience. They are knowledgeable about the impact of personal and collective, secondary, and vicarious exposure to trauma. Trauma-informed social workers recognize the importance of attending to organizational dynamics that contribute to traumatic stress. They demonstrate ethical behavior by developing and maintaining professional development activities at the micro, mezzo, and macro levels. They engage in ethical decision making that addresses the

potential risk for harm and retraumatization in the helping relationship. Trauma-informed social workers understand their own trauma-related history, clients' experience of trauma, and their positionality as it relates to issues of diversity. They recognize the impact of historical, collective, global, secondary, and vicarious exposure to trauma and the resulting cognitive shift in worldview. Furthermore, trauma-informed social workers research, study, and implement current evidence-informed approaches and technologies for working with individuals, families, organizations, and communities who have suffered violence, victimization, systemic oppression, abuse, and other personal and collective traumatic experiences while addressing complex ethical issues that may emerge within and from studying and implementing evidence-in-formed approaches.

Trauma-informed practitioners:
- Identify, attend, and facilitate ethical considerations including maintaining physical, interpersonal, spiritual, emotional, and psychological boundaries for clients and client systems, face-to-face and virtual, and demonstrate the ability to assess and address barriers to safety for clients across the lifespan.
- Make ethical decisions incorporating understanding of trauma, trauma-reflective treatment, research, and policies along with trauma-informed organizational practice, the National Association of Social Workers (NASW) Code of Ethics, models of ethical decision making, and relevant laws, policies, and regulations.
- Understand their own trauma-related history and their positionality as well as clients' experience of trauma as it relates to age, class, color, culture, disability and ability, ethnicity, gender, gender identity and expression, immigration status, marital status, political ideology, race, religion and spirituality, sex, sexual orientation, and tribal sovereign status.
- Engage in self-reflection, self-regulation strategies, and self-care practice including reflective trauma-responsive supervision to prevent and address secondary traumatic stress, compassion fatigue, vicarious trauma, and burnout in self and organization to enhance effective practice, policies, and research that considers ethical decision making related to trauma.

Competency 2: Engage Diversity and Difference in Practice
Trauma-informed social workers know that trauma occurs in a socio-political-cultural context, creating variable risk for trauma. They understand the intersectionality of diversity factors specified in 2015 EPAS (EP 3.0 on diversity) that result in disproportionate trauma exposure, access to services, and social support resources. They engage in trauma work grounded in values of cultural humility, respecting all individuals as experts of their own experiences. They understand the ideals of inclusive excellence, the complex his-tory and impact of structural oppression, and the effects of intergenerational and historical trauma on an individual's, families, or community's ability to thrive. Trauma-informed social workers uphold policies and protections for vulnerable people and marginalized populations in practice and research, advocating for trauma-informed interventions and inquiry. They draw on their professional values and use the tools of self-reflection and critical thinking to increase their self-awareness, mediating the impact of their own experiences, cognitive processes, and personal affective

responses to trauma. They pro-mote inclusivity and the rights of survivors and communities to be treated with dignity and respect and the need for responsive assessment and intervention services. Clients are valued from a strength perspective as individuals inherently capable of healing, resiliency, and wellness.

Trauma-informed practitioners:
- Engage in the ongoing process of developing cultural competence.
- Understand and build Knowledge regarding the powerful impact of diversity factors in shaping trauma experiences, help-seeking behaviors, and responses to trauma at the micro, mezzo, and macro levels.
- Integrate the meaning of trauma and responses for individuals, families, and cultural and societal groups into all levels of social work practice grounded in cultural humility.
- Implement trauma-informed principles of care, advocating for policies and trauma-sensitive services at the individual, organizational, and societal levels that are responsive to those underrepresented and oppressed in society.
- Develop cognitive self-awareness and affective self-regulation in response to the influence of personal biases and values in working inclusively with clients and constituencies.

Competency 3: Advance Human Rights and Social, Economic, and Environmental Justice
Trauma-informed social workers recognize that trauma adaptation and growth are most attainable when fundamental human rights of individuals, families, communities, and populations are upheld and restored. They are Knowledgeable about how traumatic events do not occur evenly across societal groups and understand that the contextual realities of trauma survivors often affect their ability to recover and thrive in ongoing and posttraumatic circumstances. In their work, trauma-informed social workers engage with others in ways that reflect how trauma is experienced in many ways, individually, relationally, and structurally, and requires multilevel and interprofessional response strategies. Furthermore, they advocate for policies and services to transform the social, economic, and environmental conditions that limit human rights and the quality of life, thus, promoting resilience and growth.

Trauma-informed practitioners:
- Advanced practitioners in trauma
- recognize and seek to redress human rights, social, economic, and environmental injustices resulting from or perpetuating trauma;
- Understand and apply the intersectional Knowledge between human rights frameworks and the principles of trauma-informed care with individuals, families, communities, and the workforce across micro, mezzo, and macro practice;
- Demonstrate skills in providing trauma-informed care across local, regional, and global environments; and
- Implement and encourage practices and policies that facilitate empowerment, resilience, and posttraumatic growth.

Competency 4: Engage in Practice-Informed Research and Research-informed Practice

Trauma-informed social workers understand the role of theory and its relationship to evidence-based trauma intervention. They can apply the neurobiological research on the impact of trauma experiences, including epigenetic changes and transgenerational transmission, to explain the bio-psycho-social and cultural factors related to trauma. They examine the effects trauma has on diverse populations and commit to strategies that advocate for research-in-formed trauma practice. Trauma-informed social workers understand the varying effectiveness of trauma treatment models or approaches for healing or mitigating the effects of trauma across cultures and can apply the appropriate treatment modalities. They also carefully document challenging trauma cases to inform ongoing and future research, conduct trauma-informed research, and actively collaborate with trauma researchers to ensure clinically relevant interventions. Trauma-informed social workers understand the important role of interdisciplinary research in trauma practice and collaborate interprofessionally with all stakeholders, including client systems and practitioners, to improve outcomes. Trauma-informed social workers use empirically informed strategies to regulate their cognitive and affective responses. They use trauma research to advocate for policies and systemic changes to ensure that all agencies, organizations, and systems that work with people who have histories of trauma become trauma informed.

Trauma-informed practitioners:
- Use trauma-relevant theory and the research literature to inform and conduct scientific inquiry and trauma research.
- Advocate for strategies to improve practice-informed research and research-informed practice in trauma care and for extreme events (terrorism, war, and natural and human-made disasters).
- Use research to adopt, modify, and translate practices and policies that are most appropriate to particular trauma-focused practice settings and diverse populations.

Competency 5: Engage in Policy Practice
Social workers engage in trauma-informed policy practice with a framework guided by principles of safety; trustworthiness and transparency; peer sup-port; collaboration and mutuality; empowerment, voice, and choice; and cultural, historical, and gender issues. Trauma-informed social workers under-stand that policy affects an agency's capacity to provide trauma-informed services. They use a trauma-focused lens to approach policy practice at local, state, national, and global levels and across fields of practice to prevent retraumatization by and within systems. Trauma-informed social workers use critical thinking to analyze the impact of social policy on domains of trauma and resilience across the lifespan and identify methods to improve such policies. They engage coalitions and formulate arguments in support of culturally informed evidence-based policy making to advance key policy issues related to trauma. Trauma-informed social workers seek to advance policy that recognizes and builds on the resilience of trauma-affected systems: individuals, families, groups, communities, and organizations, including the workforce, through policy analysis and advocacy.

Trauma-informed practitioners:

- Engage in the policy proposal process to amend policies across levels and fields of practice that are counter to the principles of trauma-informed practice or that retraumatize, victimize, or oppress.
- Engage stakeholders in formulation, implementation, and evaluation of trauma-informed policies to advocate for human rights and social, economic, and environmental justice, from the local to the global level.
- Advocate for trauma-informed policies to increase access and enhance service delivery, including self-care and other provisions for social workers affected by trauma.

Competency 6: Engage with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organization, and Communities.

Trauma-informed social workers recognize that individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities affected by trauma may have experienced a variety of emotional and psychological disturbances. Therefore, the process of engagement models a restorative and trusting relationship focused on pacing, empathic responding, mirroring, attending, and awareness of nonverbal behavior, including the use of empirically informed engagement and outreach strategies.

The collaborative alliance with the client and or client systems formed during the engagement process provides safety for the client and acknowledges that disclosure of trauma occurs at the client's pace. The trauma-in-formed social worker provides genuineness, sensitivity, and respect and pays particular attention to triggering stimuli and responses for themselves and the client.

The trauma-informed practitioner is cognizant of the interplay of culture and belief systems in the engagement process. Practitioners recognize that institutions and their practices and policies may exacerbate trauma and thereby negatively affect the engagement process.

Trauma-informed social workers demonstrate a heightened awareness of the conscious use of self and the ability to critically self-reflect. Social workers demonstrate an ability to engage with different cultures, understand the interpersonal dynamics of client systems in a regional and global context affected by trauma, attend to personal reactions, and use supervision.

Engagement Behaviors – Trauma Informed Social Workers:
- The trauma-informed social worker consistently demonstrates attention to nonverbal behaviors and cues, emotional dysregulation, and wariness of institutions that impede the establishment of a therapeutic alliance.
- The trauma-informed practitioner uses a range of interventions to address underlying motivations that influence help-seeking and help-rejecting behaviors, in a variety of contexts (e.g., from micro to macro) that affect engagement.
- The trauma-informed practitioner identifies, understands, respects, and addresses the range of coping strategies trauma survivors, mandated and voluntary, may demonstrate that create barriers to engagement.
- The trauma-informed social worker uses supervision and mentorship to reflect on effective use of self and affective self-regulation while navigating the engagement process, including issues such as the worker's own history of trauma, secondary traumatization, potential triggers (for both client and practitioner), and the worker's responses to those triggers.

- The trauma-informed social worker implements trauma-informed principles of engagement with services at the individual, organizational, and societal levels that are responsive to those underrepresented and oppressed in society.

Competency 7: Assess Individuals, Families, Group, and Communities

Social workers assess for the impact of trauma by using a range of behavioral, cognitive, affective, spiritual, and neurological indicators and a review of risk factors, protective factors, strengths, and resilience. They assess organizational and systemic factors that influence trauma-informed agency and organizational policies and procedures to promote effective care. Social workers collect and apply assessment data to inform the development of interprofessional, interorganizational, and collaborative systems for trauma-informed care and use data to assess the impact of compassion fatigue and vicarious and secondary trauma on staff and organizations.

Social workers respect clients' willingness to disclose trauma at their own pace, and they encourage the disclosure of historical events and explore with the client the meanings and the impact attached to those experiences. Presenting problems are assessed, through the lens of trauma, as adaptive skills that can be channeled to increase healthy functioning. Social workers use principles of developmental and ecological theory in trauma-focused assessments at the micro, mezzo, and macro levels. Social workers value the ethical responsibilities of consent and confidentiality in a trauma-informed assessment process and balance respect for privacy with the need to intervene to prevent harm to the client or others. Social workers use empirically sound trauma assessment tools that are culturally and developmentally relevant for the client to ensure that clients are physically and emotionally safe.

Social workers engage in self-assessment and reflection to recognize and address the impact of secondary trauma that can occur as a result of and providing services for clients who experience trauma and practice effective self-care strategies including appropriate use of supervision, consultation, and peer support.

Assessment Behaviors – Trauma-informed Social Workers:
- Conduct both micro- and macro-level trauma-informed assessments that explore and examine the effects of all types of traumas, trauma context, and history of trauma exposure and assess for risks, strengths, and protective factors in a developmental context across the lifespan.
- Select and use empirically sound assessment techniques that are culturally and developmentally appropriate for the client and demonstrate the ability to integrate the client's trauma assessment into a set of impressions that accurately reflect an unbiased understanding of current functioning and patterns of behaviors.
- Assess organizational readiness to incorporate trauma-informed and evidence-based programs and practices.
- Demonstrate awareness of ways in which one's own biases, experiences, potential countertransference processes, and values can affect the trauma assessment process.

Competency 8: Intervene with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities.

Social workers addressing trauma strive to create trauma-informed systems of care that recognize and respond effectively to signs of traumatic distress in human beings across their lifespan and throughout the various service settings that client's access. They bring a compassionate and nonjudgmental stance to their work and build relationships with clients based on safety, support, respect, and trust. They work to increase psychological, emotional, physical, and spiritual safety in individuals, families, communities, and organizations. They help clients develop flexible and increasingly adaptive responses to trauma effects, managing emotional dysregulation and developing maximally adaptive personal narratives in the wake of traumatic experiences.

They are mindful of the effect they can have on their clients and of the effect their clients' trauma histories can have on them. They increase resilience by helping clients develop ways of managing future exposure to potentially traumatic events while maintaining a positive sense of the future that allows maximal engagement with life opportunities. Social workers are knowledgeable about the theoretical and empirical foundations of trauma-informed evidence-based practice and apply that Knowledge to identify and implement developmentally and culturally appropriate trauma-focused interventions.

Trauma social workers facilitate healing with client systems by processing trauma experiences within somatic, affective, cognitive, and spiritual domains in a phase-based approach that attends to safety and meaning making. Trauma social workers value strength-based and empowerment-oriented approaches to practice that recognize promotive and protective factors, resiliency, and opportunities for posttraumatic growth in individuals, families, organizations, and communities. Trauma social workers build practice-based evidence to determine how to intervene in the absence of research-based evidence, when new interventions are emerging, or when modifications and adaptations are needed for cultural or contextual reasons. Trauma-informed organizations proactively promote self-care, supervision, and training in evidence-based interventions to support professional development and to address risks of vicarious traumatization. Trauma social workers advocate for social justice because they understand that systemic and structural inequality and oppression increase risk factors for and exacerbate the adverse consequences of exposure to trauma, including historical trauma. They advocate for expanding access to trauma-informed care and culturally appropriate evidence-based trauma treatments, particularly for those most vulnerable and marginalized in our society.

Intervention Behaviors – *Trauma-informed Social Workers:
- Apply knowledge of the theoretical and empirical foundations of trauma to inform the intervention process in evidence-based practice.
- Critically select and implement developmentally and culturally appropriate trauma-informed evidence-based interventions in conjunction with practitioner expertise and client preferences to address the adverse consequences of trauma.
- Modify and adapt interventions if needed to address cultural differences or contextual and environmental challenges with awareness of the need for continual evaluation.
- Advocate for the advancement of trauma-informed systems of care, expanded access to effective trauma-focused interventions, and social justice for marginalized and oppressed people who are most at risk for experiencing trauma.

- Mobilize the strengths of clients and systems to increase individual, group, family, and community resilience.
- Develop and use self-care strategies that support resiliency and well-being, to address the impact of compassion fatigue and vicarious traumatization.

Competency 9: Evaluate Practice with Individuals, Families, Groups, Organizations, and Communities.

Trauma-informed practitioners understand the impact of current and historical trauma on individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities, and they critically evaluate and apply this Knowledge in evaluating process and outcomes and use this information to inform practice decisions and quality assurance to strengthen systems of care. Evaluation of practice is collaborative and strength-based, and it seeks to empower client systems, which upholds the social contract that often has been breached in trauma survivors' experience. Qualitative and quantitative methods, including standardized measures and culturally responsive methods, are used systematically to gather data about current and historical trauma, responses to trauma, secondary traumatic stress (STS), evidence-informed trauma-specific interventions, and self-care strategies for social workers, students, educators, researchers, organizations, and communities, in order to evaluate processes and outcomes and increase practice effectiveness at all levels. Practitioners self-evaluate STS effects and engage in personal and professional strategies to minimize these effects and increase the effectiveness of the services they provide.

Evaluation Behaviors – Trauma Informed Social Workers:
- Systematically use assessment and evaluation measures of trauma history, including historical and intergenerational trauma, current trauma reactions, and risk and resilience factors when working with diverse client systems.
- Systematically evaluate processes and outcomes related to trauma-responsive, evidence-informed practice as a foundation for intervention decisions with individuals, families, groups, organizations, and communities.
- Self-assess and evaluate STS reactions when working in the field, in the classroom, or on research teams, and use self-care practices, including those that are research informed.

Student Organizations and Services

The Rights to Organize

Students have the right to organize to voice and defend their interests in academic as well as student affairs. Recognizing students' rights to voice their disagreements and to defend their interests, the Social Work Department has established procedures for students to make their voice heard.

The following groups and associations represent opportunities for graduate students to become involved with, for the larger Virginia State University community or specifically with the Department of Social Work.

Graduate Social Work Student Association

All graduate social work students will be eligible to become members of the Graduate Social Work Student Association (SWSA-G). The SWSA-G will be established with the first VSU

MSW cohort. The primary functions of SWSA-G will include, 1) learning about the social work profession, 2) meeting and socializing with other students and. 3) taking part in trainings, workshops, and community-based projects. SWSA-G will be organized and led by student leaders.

Phi Alpha National Honor Society

The Theta Beta Chapter of Phi Alpha Honor Society Chapter was established at Virginia State University in January 2011 to promote a closer bond among students of social work and to enter into more intimate fellowship with those dedicated to the promotion of humanitarian goals. Membership is open to undergraduate and graduate social work students who meet the established scholarship qualifications. The chapter invites those who have attained high academic performance to apply. For MSW students, the criteria will include admission to the MSW program, completion of at least 15 credit hours of master-level courses and earning an overall GPA of 3.70. The chapter sponsors various activities, including monthly member meetings and an induction ceremony. Ceremonies will be conducted at the conclusion of the fall and spring semesters. The program also supports the activities of the Phi Alpha by providing a faculty member to serve as an advisor.

Social Work Department Committees

Students will be invited to participate in formulating and modifying policies affecting academic and student affairs at the school level. The Social Work Department will implement the policy below to ensure adequate student representation on departmental committees. Students will also be invited to serve on ad hoc committees, such as faculty searches, as needed.

MSW Student Engagement Policy

Scope

To engage graduate social work students in program service committees to participate in formulating and modifying policies affecting academic and student affairs. Service committees with required student membership include: Assessment, Diversity Content, Field Sequence, Curriculum & Instruction. Student Engagement Committee will develop and maintain procedural materials for student nomination and assignment process.

Eligibility:
1. Student must be in good standing within the Social Work program without violations of Student Conduct Standards.
2. Student must be accepted into MSW program.
3. Student should have availability to participate in monthly meetings.
4. Student must be able to commit to one academic year appointment to assigned committee.
5. Student must have willingness to represent interests of entire student body in committee assignment including communication to gather feedback and share relevant information with fellow students including to other program options.
6. Student can only sit on one committee per appointment year.

Nomination & Appointment process:

1. Call for nomination via email to all program students and faculty for two weeks during the fall semester. Additional call for nominations will be offered as needed during the year to fill unexpected vacancies.
2. Students can self-nominate by completing electronic form during nomination period. Faculty, staff or students can also nominate students or peers via this electronic form. Students nominated by faculty or peers must accept nomination in order to be considered.
3. Nominees should provide a brief statement about teamwork skills and interest in social work education policy. Nominees should also indicate committee preferences.
4. Student Engagement Committee will facilitate electronic vote among students and faculty for nominees for each committee seat.

Support for Student Professional Development

Support for scholarship is currently available for all BSW students and will be available for MSW students at all program options. Priority will be given to students who are presenting at a conference or to support a specific research study. Other requests (e.g., conference attendance only) will be considered if funding is available.

Eligibility Criteria
- Current BSW or MSW Student
- Good academic standing

Requirements for Support
- Complete "Application for Scholarship Support".
- Complete a "Request for Travel Form," which includes a budget and other resources of financial support.
- Provide a short letter of support from the Principal Investigator for the research project and/or faculty mentor.

Types of Support
- Conference presentation

Students can request up to $500 to support travel related expenses (e.g., conference registration, airfare, meal stipend, other travel related expenses, etc.) to present at a conference. Although priority will be given to conference presentations, students can also submit requests to attend a conference without doing a presentation. These requests will only be considered based upon availability of funds. Students will need to submit the following information beyond the required forms/letters:
- Name of the conference
- Location
- Dates
- Name of presentation with the abstract, if applicable
- Identify type of presentation (e.g., paper, workshop, poster, other), if applicable
- IRB approval letter, if applicable

While registration and airfare can be paid for prior to the conference, all other expenses will require an expense report and receipts to be submitted within 30 days of attendance to the conference.

- Research Support.

Students can request up to $500 to support an IRB-approved research study. Students will need to submit the following information beyond the required forms/letters:

- IRB Approval letter.

Students, who receive funding to support funding, will need to submit an expense report with receipts to receive a reimbursement.

Deadline

- One month before the conference or start of the student's research project.

III   ADMISSIONS TO THE MSW PROGRAM; POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

There is a process, with policies and procedures, for admittance to the Department of Social Work Graduate Program

Admission Criteria

Applicants to the Traditional MSW Program (2- Years / 60 credit hours)

Applicants must have:
1. A baccalaureate degree from a regionally accredited college or university.
2. A liberal arts background with a minimum of 30 credit hours including one course in psychology, sociology and introductory statistics. These undergraduate requirements may be taken at any accredited college or university, including community colleges. All prerequisites for admission must be completed by the end of the first semester in the program. All offers of admission are conditional upon the successful completion, a grade of C or better, of the undergraduate coursework.
3. A minimum grade point average of 3.0 on the last 60 upper division credits on the last 120 credits leading to the bachelors' degree. Both GPAs are used in consideration for admission. Applicants with a GPA between 2.5 to 3.0 on the 120 credits leading to the bachelors' degree, but an otherwise strong application will be considered for provisional admission (3.0 will be required on the 60 upper divisions credits). Graduate credits will be considered in assessing an applicant's qualifications.
4. Three Letters of Recommendation from:
   a. One recommendation from a higher education academic source.
   b. One recommendation from an employer.
   c. One recommendation from another professional source or community associate.

   Instructions for Letters of Recommendation:

   - Be sure to enter the following information for each recommender: Name, address, e-mail address, phone number, institution or employer and title.
   - It is extremely important to enter recommenders' e-mail addresses correctly so they receive automated e-mails instructing them how to proceed with their recommendation through the online process.

- Waiver – applicants must choose whether or not to waive their rights to review recommendations. Applicants' choices will be transmitted to recommenders in the instructional emails they will receive. Once applicants have submitted their application, the waiver decisions cannot be changed.
- Mark the waiver statement for each recommender entered. If applicants do not check the waiver statement, many recommenders will not complete the recommendation process.
- If recommenders experience technical difficulties, they should contact the University's online application vendor by clicking on the link given in the email they receive about the online recommendation process.
- After a recommender submits the online recommendation, the recommendation will become part of the applicant's application. Applicants are welcome to submit additional letters of recommendation, and any letter of recommendation included with the application will remain with the applicants file for review.
- If applicants or recommenders have technical difficulty with the online letter of recommendation system, contact the Admissions Office at GradAdmiss@vsu.edu for assistance with completing the online application.

   Applicants may tract the status of the online recommendations submitted through their Ellucian CRM Recruit accounts after their applications are submitted to Virginia State University.

5. Submit a current resume.
6. Complete a criminal background check and drug test.
7. <u>Professional Statement of Intent</u> – Applicants must demonstrate their understanding of the social work profession and their suitability for this program.

Application Writing Prompts: Applicants are to prepare and submit a statement covering the questions below. Applicants' personal statements should be a minimum of two (2) pages, no more than three (3) pages, typed, double-spaced, and in 12-point font. Please use the number and its associated topic area (in bold and underlined) as headings when completing personal statement.

Statement of Confidentiality: Mandated reporters are persons who, in the course of their work, may be privy to information that they are required to report to an appropriate enforcement agency. Social workers in the state of Virginia are mandated reporters and must report any disclosure of suspected incidents of child abuse and neglect, including child sexual abuse. Virginia State University social work faculty and staff are required to report any suspected incidents of child abuse and neglect, whether or not the suspected incident was previously reported. Therefore, any disclosure (written or verbal) by students or prospective students of suspected incidents of child abuse and/or neglect will be immediately reported to the appropriate authorities.

1. **Social Work Knowledge:**

Discuss your motivation for choosing the social work profession and how it connects to your current and long-term career goals.

2. **Respect for Diversity:**
   Identify the experiences you have had which make you feel that you can work effectively with people from diverse populations (religious, racial, ethnic, disability, socio-economic, gender, and sexual orientation differences). Also describe any difficulties you might have when working as a social worker with any of the diverse populations. Be specific

Applicants to the Advanced Standing Program (1 – Year / 45 credit hours)

Applicants must have:

1. A baccalaureate degree from an undergraduate social work program accredited by the Council on Social Work Education within the last three years. Applicants who graduated from an undergraduate social work program accredited by the Council on Social Work Education within the last five years and have two years of human service work during those five years, will be considered for the Advanced Standing program.

2. A broad liberal arts background with a minimum of 30 hours including at least one course in: sociology, psychology, and an introductory course in statistics. These undergraduate requirements may be taken at any accredited college or university, including community colleges. All prerequisites for admission must be completed prior to beginning the second semester in the program. All offers of admission are conditional upon the successful completion of the undergraduate coursework.

3. A minimum grade point average of 3.5 on the last 60 upper division credits (including all Social Work courses and the three prerequisites) and a 3.0 GPA on the last 120 credits leading to the bachelor's degree. Both GPA's will be used to consider admission. If the applicant has a 2.8 to 3.0 GPA on the last 120 credits leading to the bachelor's degree, but an otherwise strong application, consideration will be given for provisional admission (3.2 is needed on the 60 upper division GPA). Graduate credits will be considered in assessing an applicant's qualifications.

4. Applicants must submit a criminal background check and drug

5. Four Letters of Recommendation from
   a. One recommendation from the Field Education Liaison who taught the applicant's most recent Field Education Seminar course
   b. One recommendation from the Field Supervisor from the applicant's undergraduate Field Education Placement/Agency.
   c. One recommendation from a higher education program academic source.
   d. One recommendation from either an employer or professional or community associate.

   Instructions:
   • Be sure to enter the following information for each recommender: Name, address, e-mail address, phone number, institution or employer and title.

- It is extremely important to ender recommenders' e-mail addresses correctly so they receive automated e-mails instructing them how to proceed with their recommendation through the online process.
- Waiver – applicants must choose whether or not to waive their rights to review recommendations. Applicants' choices will be transmitted to recommenders in the instructional emails they will receive. Once applicants have submitted their application, the waiver decisions cannot be changed.
- Mark the waiver statement for each recommender entered. If applicants do not check the waiver statement, many recommenders will not complete the recommendation process.
- If recommenders experience technical difficulties, they should contact the University's online application vendor by clicking on the link given in the email they receive about the online recommendation process.
- After a recommender submits the online recommendation, the recommendation will become part of the applicant's application. Applicants are welcome to submit additional letters of recommendation, and any letter of recommendation included with the application will remain with the applicants file for review.
- If applicants or recommenders have technical difficulty with the online letter of recommendation system, contact the Admissions Office at GradAdmiss@vsu.edu for assistance with completing the online application.

6. Submit final field evaluation from undergraduate field education experience.
7. Complete a criminal background check and drug test.
8. Submit a current resume.
9. <u>Professional Statement of Intent</u> – Applicants must demonstrate their understanding of the social work profession and their suitability for this program.

Application Writing Prompts: Applicants are to prepare and submit a statement covering the questions below. Applicants' personal statements should be a minimum of three (3) pages, no more than four (43) pages, typed, double-spaced, and in 12-point font. Please use the number and its associated topic area (in bold and underlined) as headings when completing personal statement.

<u>Critical Thinking and Social Work Knowledge:</u>
We all face challenges in our own lives and our job as social workers is to help our clients address their problems. Please discuss a time when you, at your job/internship or in a volunteer capacity, worked to assist someone address a problem. Describe the individual's problem. Discuss how you assisted them in addressing and resolving the problem as a professional or volunteer. Identify the specific skills and information you learned from your undergraduate social work education that aided you in addressing the problem. Identify the outcome of the problem and what you learned from the experience.

<u>Respect for Diversity:</u>
Write about your experiences working with diverse populations (religious, racial, ethnic, disability, socio-economic, gender, and sexual orientation differences). Which issues and

populations do you find particularly challenging? How have you handled those challenges in the past, or what would you like to learn to handle those challenges more effectively in the future?

Admissions Assessment and Notification

Assessment will be made on the basis of the applicant's academic performance and background, social work and related work experience, personal qualifications, references, and indications of a commitment to the profession. Additionally, applicants should have interests or life experiences appropriate to the practice of professional social work. All applicants will be informed about their acceptance status by an electronic letter to their email from the Director of the Graduate Program followed by a letter sent in the U.S. mail.

Prerequisites for Admission

All prerequisites for admission must be completed prior to beginning the second semester in the program. All offers of admission will be conditional upon the successful completion of the undergraduate coursework.

Non-Degree Students

Eligible applicants who wish to enroll as non-degree graduate students (not formally admitted to a graduate degree program) will not be required to complete a formal application for admission to the School of Social Work but must complete application to the university. Non-degree students enroll in the graduate classes noted below, by submitting a completed non-Degree registration form to the Registrar's Office. Students in this status will be eligible to schedule up to three graduate classes (nine credit hours), specifically SOWK 601, SOWK 602, and SOWK 615. Non-degree graduate students, who plan to apply to the MSW online option, are permitted to take the three courses online and will be assessed the online tuition.

Transfer of Graduate Credits

Students may receive a maximum of 6 semester hours for work completed not more than five years prior to first registration from a CSWE-accredited graduate school of social work and for which a grade of at least a "B" was received. No course, including any transfer course, may be counted toward a degree if it was completed more than 6-7 full calendar years prior to the date of graduation.

Students must complete a minimum of 30 credits in the Virginia State University Department of Social Work to be eligible for the master's degree.

Students currently or previously enrolled in another CSWE accredited Master of Social Work degree program who are seeking admission as a transfer student are required to submit the following materials:

1. a brief written statement describing the reasons why they are requesting the transfer;
2. a copy of Field Education evaluations, if applicable; and

3. one of the three recommendations must be from a faculty member or Field Supervisor affiliated with the program.

Students from non-MSW graduate programs may receive a maximum of six transfer credits for courses for which s/he has earned a grade of "A" or "B". Each course will be assessed for program equivalency. Typically, the only course that can transfer is a course to count as an elective or a prerequisite. Official determinations of allowable credit for coursework completed elsewhere will be made at the time of admission.

Life Experience Non-Credit Policy

The Virginia State University MSW program will not grant social work credit life experience or previous work experience.

Provisional Admission

MSW regular program applicants with a GPA of 2.7 to 2.99 on the 120 credits leading to the bachelor's degree (and a 3.0 on the 60 credit GPA), but an otherwise strong application, may be admitted provisionally to the program. Both GPA calculations (60 credit and 120 credit) are considered for admission.

Applicants to the Advanced Standing option with a GPA of 2.8 to 3.0 GPA on the last 120 credits leading to the bachelor's degree, but an otherwise strong application (and a 3.2 on the 60 credit GPA), may be considered for provisional admission. Graduate credits will be considered in assessing an applicant's qualifications.

Students admitted provisionally based on the GPA may take up to nine hours their first semester and they will be required to earn a "B" or better in all classes their first semester in the program. Students on provisional status will be ineligible to participate in Field Education/placement, which may extend their master's academic career. Students are to verify their schedule with their advisor. Provisional status will be reviewed after the posting of first semester grades, and once requirements are met, the student may begin to pursue Field Education and be fully admitted to the program.

Conditional Admission

Applicants who have not successfully completed the required liberal arts background may be admitted conditionally. Students may take the prerequisite classes at any accredited university or community college. The MSW Admission and Academic Review Committee reserve the right to request that students retake a liberal arts course in which a grade below a "C" was earned. Students must submit proof of successful completion of the course to be fully admitted to the program.

Refer to:
VSU MSW Program Application Process

IV   CURRICULUM

Master of Social Work Program Curriculum

The 60 credit MSW curriculum includes a 30 credit Generalist Practice Curriculum and a 30 credit Specialized Practice Curriculum. The MSW program may be completed full-time in 2 years or part-time in 4 years.

The Advanced Standing Program is comprised of 45 credits and may be completed full-time in 1 year over 3 semesters.

60 – Credit Full-Time Curriculum - Bachelor Degree not in Social Work

1st Year
Fall Semester

SOWK 601 Principles & Practices of the Social Work Profession		3
SOWK 602 Human Behavior & the Social Environment I		3
SOWK 603 Generalist Practice w/Individuals & Groups		3
SOWK 604 Generalist Practice w/Families		3
SOWK 605 Field Practicum I & Integrative Seminar		3
	Total	**15**

Spring Semester

SOWK 615 Human Behavior in the Social Environment: Poverty, Oppression & Trauma II		3
SOWK 616 Social Science Research Methods		3
SOWK 617 Diversity & Cultural Competency in Social Work Practice		3
SOWK 618 Generalist Practice II (Communities & Organizations)		3
SOWK 619 Field Practicum II & Integrative Seminar		3
	Total	**15**

2nd Year
Fall Semester

SOWK 720 Trauma and Resiliency in SOWK Practice		3
SOWK 725 DSM-5: Differential Assessment & Diagnosis in Clinical SOWK		3
SOWK 726 Neuroscience & SOWK Practice		3
SOWK 727 Trauma-Informed Clinical SOWK Practice w/Families		3
SOWK 728		3
Practicum III & Seminar		
	Total	**15**

Spring Semester

SOWK 735 Trauma & Attachment Theory		3
SOWK 736 Trauma-Informed Clinical SOWK Practice w/Groups		3
SOWK 737 Trauma-Focused Research Course		3
SOWK 738 Field Practicum IV & Integrative Seminar		3
Specialized Restricted Elective		3

	Total	15

Total Credit Hours 60

Part-Time Curriculum – Bachelor Degree not in Social Work

<u>1st Year</u>

Fall Semester

SOWK 601 Principles & Practices of the Social Work Profession		3
SOWK 602 Human Behavior & the Social Environment		3
	Total	6

Spring Semester

SOWK 603 Generalist Practice w/Individuals & Groups		3
SOWK 604 Generalist Practice w/Families		3
	Total	6

Summer Semester

SOWK 605 Field Practicum I & Integrative Seminar		3
	Total	3

<u>2nd Year</u>

Fall Semester

SOWK 615 Human Behavior in the Social Environment: Poverty, Oppression & Trauma		3
SOWK 616 Social Science Research Methods		3
	Total	6

Spring Semester

SOWK 617 Diversity & Cultural Competency in Social Work Practice		3
SOWK 618 Generalist Practice II (Communities & Organizations)		3
	Total	6

Summer Semester

SOWK 619 Field Practicum II & Integrative Seminar		3
	Total	3

<u>3rd Year</u>

Fall Semester

SOWK 720 Trauma and Resiliency in SOWK Practice		3
SOWK 725 DSM-5: Differential Assessment & Diagnosis in Clinical SOWK		3
	Total	6

Spring Semester

SOWK 726 Neuroscience & SOWK Practice		3
SOWK 727 Trauma-Informed Clinical SOWK Practice w/Families		3
	Total	6

Summer Semester

SOWK 728 Field Practicum III & Seminar		3
	Total	3

<u>4th Year</u>

Fall Semester

SOWK 735 Trauma & Attachment Theory		3
SOWK 736 Trauma-Informed Clinical SOWK Practice w/Groups		3
	Total	**6**

Spring Semester

SOWK 737 Trauma-Focused Research Course		3
Specialized Restricted Elective		3
	Total	**6**

Summer Semester

SOWK 738 Field Practicum IV & Seminar		3
	Total	**6**

Total Credit Hours 60

Advanced Standing Full-Time Curriculum – Bachelor Degree in Social Work
<u>One year</u>
Summer Semester

SOWK 607 ADVSTD – Social Work Practice II		3
SOWK 608 ADVSTD – Social Work Research Methods		3
SOWK 609 ADVSTD – Cultural Diversity and Social Welfare Policy & Practice		3
SOWK 610 ADVSTD – Field Practicum		3
	Total	**15**

Fall Semester

SOWK 720 Trauma and Resiliency in SOWK Practice		3
SOWK 725 DSM-5: Differential Assessment & Diagnosis in Clinical SOWK		3
SOWK 726 Neuroscience & SOWK Practice		3
SOWK 727 Trauma-Informed Clinical SOWK Practice w/Families		3
SOWK 728 Field Practicum III & Seminar		3
	Total	**15**

Spring Semester

SOWK 735 Trauma & Attachment Theory		3
SOWK 736 Trauma-Informed Clinical SOWK Practice w/Groups		3
SOWK 737 Trauma-Focused Research Capstone Course		3
SOWK 738 Field Practicum IV & Integrative Seminar		3
SOWK XXX Restricted Elective		3
	Total	**15**

Total Credit Hours 45

Course Descriptions

Generalist (Foundation) Courses - Degree not in Social Work

SOWK 601 Principles & Practices of the Social Work Profession (3 cr.)
This course is designed to introduce students to the basic concepts, values, and assumptions of the social work profession and to provide a general overview of theories and models of social

work practice. Students will focus on the initial phase of the social work intervention process that includes the development of effective helping relationships characterized by the ability to demonstrate genuineness, empathic caring and respect that leads to trustworthiness in social work practice. Students will apply social work concepts in collaborative experiential learning course activities and exercises.

SOWK 602 Human Behavior and the Social Environment I (3 cr.)
This course is designed to provide a broad and essential human behavior framework that introduces evidence-based multi-theoretical and multidimensional behavioral perspectives for understanding the biological, psychological, spiritual, aspects of human behavior. Included will be content on the economic, political and complex sociocultural interactive factors that also impact and help shape the lives of individuals, families and groups in multicultural environments.

SOWK 603 Generalist Social Work Practice with Individuals & Groups (3 cr.)
This course builds on the introductory content in SOWK 601 and continues with presentation of the basic knowledge, assumptions, skills and values necessary to provide a range of social work intervention skill sets that help to maintain, enhance, restore, rehabilitate human services needs among client populations. This course introduces selected theories and practice models to guide intervention in social work practice with individuals and groups while emphasizing the multidimensional and diverse contexts in which problems and needs are assessed and in which interventions occur.

SOWK 604 Generalist Social Work Practice with Families (3 cr.)
This course is designed to provide graduate level MSW students with the family theory/therapy practice models utilized for family therapy assessment and intervention in social work practice with families. The course will focus on the family as a natural social system in context and on strengths-based perspectives in family functioning while attending to cultural diversity as well as the differences in family structure and developmental tasks among various populations groups.

SOWK 615 Human Behavior in the Social Environment: Poverty, Oppression & Trauma (3 cr.)
This course that covers content on critical life course human development theories beginning with conception and following development through adolescence, middle and late adulthood. In addition, students will examine the significant influence, roles, and functions and identified traumatic effects of oppressive environmental factors on individual biological, psychological, social and spiritual coping and adaptation.

SOWK 616 Social Science Research Methods (3 cr.)
This course introduces the methods of social work research, including problem formulation, research designs, measurement, data collection and sampling. The course focuses on the application of critical thinking skills, diversity and effective research methods for clinical social work practice. This course also covers evaluation of social work programs and services.

SOWK 617 Diversity & Cultural Competency in Social Work Practice (3 cr.)

This course covers content designed to enhance student self-awareness, recognition, understanding and appreciation of diversity among societal population groups as well as recognize and appreciate the many forms of multicultural differences in society as a whole. The course also helps students identify and analyze oppression resulting from persisting social, educational, political, economic, religious and legal inequalities. The course provides a focus on the experiences of oppressed groups in the United States to help increase student competency in both recognition and understanding of the strengths, needs and responses to oppressive societal conditions and experiences.

SOWK 618 Generalist Practice II (Communities & Organizations) (3 cr.)

This course presents social work theory and practice that focuses on social policy, communities, agencies and organizations and the related social and economic justice principles in macro practice. Course content introduces and analyzes the specific skill sets in social work policy practice and provides skill building in advocacy, planned change and policy and organizational analysis.

Generalist (Foundation) Courses - Bachelor Degree in Social Work (Advanced Standing)

SOWK 607 ADVSTD - Social Work Practice II (3 cr.)

This course focuses on the phases of the social work intervention process and reviews the basic concepts, values, assumptions, and skill sets of the social work practice that help to maintain, restore, rehabilitate human services needs among diverse client populations. The course reviews selected social work theories and practice models to guide intervention in social work practice with individuals, families and groups while also emphasizing the multidimensional and diverse contexts in which problems and needs are assessed and in which interventions occur.

SOWK 608 ADVSTD - Social Work Research Methods (3 cr.)

This course reviews the methods of social work research including problem formulation, research designs, measurement, data collection and sampling. Students will work with the research instructor to complete a trauma-focused research proposal, the first phase of a required research project that will be finalized and presented in SOWK 638, the program specialization research capstone course. The completed research project paper is the benchmark trauma-focused assignment. The date of submission and presentation is to be determine by the Program. Students must earn a grade of "B" or better for this competency-based capstone assignment.

SOWK 609 ADVSTD – Cultural Diversity and Social Welfare Policy & Practice (3 cr.)

This course provides generalist practice students with the historical evolutionary background of social policy, and current policy practice approaches in social welfare services, organizations and communities. The course introduces the value-based role of social workers as advocates and change agents in policy formulation, in social and economic justice methods, and in legislative, community and organizational arenas. The course introduces and emphasizes the application of socio-behavioral intervention models and analytical frameworks for assessing program organizational and policy efficacy.

Specialized Practice Courses

SOWK 720 Trauma and Resiliency in SOWK Practice (3 cr.)
This course provides a clinical definition and overview of the concept of trauma, the types of traumas, the broad range of traumatic experiences and the effects of trauma on biopsychosocial development at the individual, family, community and institutional levels. Relatedly, the accompanying focus on resilience, including an overview of factors that promote resilience over the course of trauma and life after trauma, will be introduced to students as a concept central for understanding and intervention with client populations who are survivors of various types of traumatic experiences.

SOWK 725 DSM-5 Differential Assessment & Diagnosis in Clinical SOWK (3 cr.)
This course covers a range of mental, emotional and behavioral disorders that are diagnosed from childhood through the adulthood life span. The course examines the etiology and classification of these conditions and the significance of biopsychosocial spiritual and cultural differential diagnostic assessment in clinical social work practice. Additionally, the course introduces basic knowledge of the most common psychopharmacologic agents as they are commonly prescribed to treat and manage the most frequently diagnosed mental, emotional and behavioral disorders.

SOWK 726 Neuroscience & SOWK Practice (3 cr.)
This course is designed to provide MSW students with the neurobiological perspective that supports the human development process. The course emphasizes the neurobiological contribution to the person-in-environment self-regulatory capacity that includes emotional reactivity (dysregulation, auto-regulation and co-regulation), all requisite for differential biopsychosocial assessment and practice application in social work intervention. The course emphasizes the knowledge and understanding of theoretical perspectives of the transactions between the biologic individual and environment that help shape and condition cognition, emotions and behavior as significant factors during differential assessment and intervention planning with diverse individuals and families in clinical social work practice.

SOWK 727 Trauma-Informed Clinical SOWK Practice w/Families (3 cr.)
This graduate level trauma-informed course is designed to provide clinical students with advanced multi-theoretical family therapy perspectives including specialized research and theory-based family therapy trauma focused interventions. The course will focus on the family as a natural social system in context and on strengths-based perspectives in family functioning while attending to the effects of trauma on family structure and developmental tasks. Primary emphasis is on the mastery of family theory/therapy-based assessment principles and intervention strategies inclusive of trauma-informed treatment strategies for effective intervention outcomes.

SOWK 735 Trauma & Attachment Theory (3 cr.)
This course provides an in-depth coverage of attachment theory and the relationship between childhood trauma and types of attachment and the predictive role of childhood trauma on types of attachment. Specifically, the course examines the theoretical perspectives of attachment and

evidence-based trauma correlations between early loss or absence of consistent caregiving. Early negative childhood experiences such as emotional, physical or sexual abuse and various forms of neglect are examined as primary types of early childhood experiences that create vulnerability to trauma and childhood developmental disorders that extend well into adulthood.

SOWK 736 Trauma-Informed Clinical SOWK Practice w/Groups (3cr.)
This advanced specialization course includes and builds on generalist social group work theory and intervention skills. The course is designed to provide research-based group theory perspectives and intervention strategies that focus on group experiential application/practice interventions and clinical skill sets for social work practice with diverse group client systems. Trauma-informed group theory perspectives and related trauma-informed clinical group practice skill will be identified and utilized in collaborative learning experiential group applications with in-class student-assigned group client systems.

SOWK 737 Trauma-Focused Research Course (3 cr.)
This is the second and final research course in the MSW program. It builds on SOWK 616 in which students completed and submitted a trauma-focused research proposal. Program faculty were assigned individual students during the summer and fall semesters to continue with work with students on each student's research project. In this course, students complete the research project, write and submit the report to the course instructor for a final course grade. The completed research project paper is the capstone benchmark trauma-focused assignment. The date of submission is to be determined by the Program. Students must earn a B or better for this assignment.

Field Practicum Courses

SOWK 605 Foundation Field Practicum I & Integrative Seminar (3 cr.)
Students are assigned for two days (15 field hours) per week for 15 weeks (200+ field hours), in program-assigned social work field practice settings. This field practicum provides the required program curriculum practice opportunities for students to apply and master essential social work generalist practice knowledge, values and skills under the direction of an agency-based field instructor, and monitored by an assigned program faculty field liaison. The field practicum emphasizes integration of content from all areas of the foundation curriculum and includes an on-campus weekly 60 minute required integrative field seminar group session for all registered students in SOWK 605.

SOWK 619 Field Practicum II & Integrative Seminar (3 cr.)
Students are assigned for two days (14 hours per week for 15 weeks – 200+ field hours) in program-assigned social work field practice settings. This field practicum provides the required program curriculum practice opportunities for students to apply and master essential social work generalist practice knowledge, values and skills under the direction of an agency-based field instructor, monitored by an assigned program faculty field liaison. The field practicum emphasizes integration of content from all areas of the foundation curriculum and includes an on-campus weekly 60 minute required integrative field seminar group session for all registered students in SOWK 619.

SOWK 728 Field Practicum III & Seminar (3 cr.)
Students spend 21 hours per week in the field (250+ field hours). This is the initial specialization course of a two-course sequence that is designed to provide agency-based field practice instruction with planned opportunities to master advanced social work application of theory knowledge, values, and skills and including a focus on trauma-informed intervention skills. Students assigned to the field practicum placement practice under the direction of the program-approved agency-based field instructor, monitored by a program faculty field liaison. The course emphasizes integration of content from all areas of the specialization curriculum and includes an on-campus weekly 60 minute required integrative field seminar group session for all registered students in SOWK 728. *This course is also required for a master's degree in social work (Advanced Standing) pathway.*

SOWK 738 Field Practicum IV & Integrative Seminar (3 cr.)
This is the second and a continuation of a two-course specialized field instruction course sequence. Students spend 21 hours per week (250+ field hours) in agency-based field practice instruction with planned opportunities to master advanced social work application of theory knowledge, values, and skills that includes a focus on trauma-informed intervention skills. Students are assigned to the field practicum placement course and practice under the direction of the program-approved agency-based field instructor and are monitored by a program faculty field liaison. The course emphasizes integration of content from all areas of the specialization curriculum and includes an on-campus weekly 60 minute required integrative field seminar group session for all registered students in SOWK 738. *This course is also required for a master's degree in social work (Advanced Standing) pathway.*

Field Practicum Courses - Bachelor Degree in Social Work (Advanced Standing)

SOWK 610: ADVSTD - Field Practicum (3 cr.)
Students are assigned for two days (15 field hours) per week for 15 weeks (200 field hours) in program-assigned social work field practice settings. This field practicum provides the required program curriculum practice opportunities for students to apply and master essential social work generalist practice knowledge, values and skills under the direction of an agency-based field instructor, and monitored by an assigned program faculty field liaison. The field practicum emphasizes integration of content from all areas of the foundation curriculum and includes an on-campus weekly 60 minute required integrative field seminar group session for all registered students in SOWK 610.

Restricted Electives

SOWK 644 Social Work in the Social Service Environment (3 cr.)
This course is designed to focus on the recognition and identification of the special needs as well as the ethnicity and diversity of underrepresented, economically insecure and/or other marginalized client groups such as bisexual and transgender individuals, single-parent, gay and lesbian families and other differences when providing social work services in private and public

social services environments. An important focus of this course is the backdrop of public service politics and service characteristics that may be identified in public social services environments.

SOWK 645 Trauma & Substance Abuse (3 cr.)

This elective course is designed to examine theory-based approaches to recognize, identify and address the significant impact of substance use on biopsychosocial functioning of individual and families in their environments. The content identifies the evidence-based multidimensional correlations between developmental trauma and other types of trauma experiences and substance use based on the DSM 5 assessment of substance use impairments. Important for student social work practice are the substance use screening, assessment and intervention strategies provided for work with clients challenged by substance use impairments.

SOWK 646 Trauma-Informed Care in Organizational Settings (3 cr.)

This course is designed to introduce the trauma-informed care and resilience approach/paradigm for organizational settings. The course correlates with content in SOWK 648 and 649 and focuses on a broad ecological explanatory perspective to explain individual and family developmental responses to biopsychosocial environmental stressors and the impact on organizational and community development. The course specifically identifies and underscores the influence of trauma on neurological and socioemotional behavioral responses of individuals and groups in organizations and the effects of trauma on emotional dysregulation behavioral responses. The course introduces the seven significant principles of trauma-informed care changes and advocacy intervention strategies that define a trauma-informed organizational paradigm and principles of resiliency.

SOWK 648 Trauma-Informed Clinical SOWK in School Settings (3 cr.)

This course is designed to introduce the trauma-informed care and resilience approach/paradigm for clinical social work in school settings. The course correlates with content in SOWK 649 and focuses on a broad ecological explanatory perspective to explain the interdependence of school, family and community and identifies and underscores the influence of trauma on neurological and socioemotional behavioral responses of children in school settings. The course introduces the seven overriding principles of trauma-informed care and advocacy strategies that may be utilized in the school setting to assist with the development of trauma-informed care intervention principles.

SOWK 747 Trauma in the Military (3 cr.)

This course covers the multiple situations that military personnel experience which are identified as traumatizing events and experiences that independently or together, are major contributors for the development of posttraumatic stress disorders in the military, as defined and described in the DSM 5 Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (APA, 2013). Multiple deployments, witnessing death or dismemberment or injury of fellow warriors, separation from family, conflict between civilian and military culture and military sexual trauma are some of the factors that will be explored as precipitants of trauma for male and female military personnel.

SOWK 749 Administration & Supervision in Trauma Informed Systems of Care (3 cr.)

This course presents knowledge of organizational theories and provides strategies for problem-solving in the internal and external environments of organizations and programs and provides

strategies for analyzing problems internal and external to the organization and program. The course also examines the tasks and responsibilities in supervision of the social worker and presents a trauma-informed theoretical framework for supervision in an organization with a focus on methods and skill sets for trauma-informed administrative and supervisory intervention and practice.

SOWK 750 Trauma-Informed Leadership: Advocacy & Policy Practice (3 cr.)
This course presents a trauma-informed knowledge base and the attendant related skills for social work leadership in the administration, development and advocacy skill sets required in offering human social services programs that are socially and economically just. The course provides a specific focus on trauma-informed advocacy based on the traumatizing events that have occurred in the lives of individuals that underscore effective intervention and leadership processes. The course also explores underlying assumptions, political, and value-based ethical consideration in advocacy and policy practice planning and assists students in analyzing the sociopolitical context for effective leadership in policy practice settings.

V   ACADEMIC POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

Faculty Advising – Academic and Professional

Advising is an essential part of the educational process. Academic advisors provide students with pertinent information about the MSW Program and assist them in planning their program of study. Professional and academic social work advisement is conducted by full-time faculty and/or the Department's Education Specialist. Advisors are thoroughly trained in university and program policies and procedures and have comprehensive knowledge of the program. Advisors offer a range of opportunities for student advising including scheduled office hours when students may meet with them, scheduled virtual hours and chat sessions, and advising through email or zoom.

Initial academic advising is provided by the Office of Graduate Admissions.   The Director of Graduate Admissions hold group advising sessions each semester in advance of registration dates and will be also available via e-mail, Zoom, personal appointment, and phone. The Director of Graduate Admissions provide all students with tools to map and manage their academic curriculum as well as access to school and campus support resources. Students are encouraged to speak with a social work department academic advisor to develop an educational plan that will meet the academic requirements to complete the program within the prescribed time frame. In addition, the academic advisor and program staff are available to meet about curriculum matters, the structure of the academic program, academic rules, and degree requirements
.
In addition to group sessions and one-on-one meetings, the Director of Graduate Admissions and the Director of the MSW Program organizes an open house each fall prior to registration for spring classes to provide students with specific information about the school's specializations and area. Faculty who teaches in the specialization area and field education faculty participate, and offer students the opportunity to hear about the trauma informed specialization. Online videos on the trauma informed clinical specialization are also available for students to view on

the school's website. Students are encouraged to view the videos before attending the open house and to come prepared with specific questions for MSW program chair and faculty

Special advising sessions are organized for spring-admitted part-time students and advanced standing students. Both spring admits and advanced standing students receives direct outreach due to the nature of their program. Advanced standing students are required to attend an advising session scheduled in April every year prior to new-student registration. These sessions provide information about curriculum requirements, how advanced standing students will be entering the program, and navigation of the advanced year, and they have an opportunity to meet and speak other faculty and administrators. Participants in these advising sessions include the Dean of the College of Humanities and Social Sciences, the Vice President/Provost for Academic Affairs, Registrar, Director of Field Education and the Director of Financial Aid Office. Advanced standing students who are unable to attend this advising session because of distance or other reasons must arrange to speak with the academic advisor prior to registration.

MSW Program Academic Advising

Policies:

During new student orientation, incoming students meet with their advisor. In most instances, that advisor follow the student through their MSW Program course of study. Each advisor work with student advisees to clarify educational options, to answer questions about the MSW program, to identify career opportunities, and to serve as a primary contact person.

Procedures:

Advisors are the first contact for any or all of the following:
- Registration (including add/drop, leave of absence, withdrawals);
- Change of specialized practice and selection of certificate programs;
- Clarification on all academic policies and procedures (i.e., advanced standing and exemptions, graduation requirements, grading policies, directed study);
- Academic advising discussions including those regarding expectations and performance as well as grievance policies and procedures;
- Professional advising questions including policies and procedures for grievance

MSW Program Professional Advising

Policies:
Students are encouraged to meet with faculty members for professional advising. While all faculty meet regularly with students, select faculty serve as chairs of major curriculum focused areas in the trauma informed clinical specializations. Faculty members are available for professional advising during office hours and by appointment. Students are able to find faculty members' biographies on the department's website to determine research interests, subject areas of expertise, and courses taught.

Procedures:
Advising sessions may be held in addition to the group sessions at the open house described above. Group and individual meetings include discussions about the marketplace for jobs in the specialized practice, advice about the plausible outcomes of different focus areas, specific trainings or extracurricular activities that can complement MSW courses, and general advice about how students can strategically package or frame their social work skill set to potential employers.

Student Retention and Continuation Plan
All students are expected to meet with faculty advisors at least twice during each semester to discuss academic progress and to update their plan of study. In addition to regular interaction with students, program faculty also meet at least once each semester to discuss the performance of each student in the program. Grade point average, academic progress in classes, and the professional behavioral standards each student demonstrates in class and in field internship placement-based learning assignments will be carefully assessed for compliance with the CSWE Educational Policy Accreditation Standards (EPAS).

Faculty identify students who meet course requirements, submit quality work in a timely manner, who work well in group processes and successfully complete assigned field internship-based learning assignments. Faculty also identify students who are not successfully achieving program goals and meeting program standards. When faculty identify students who are experiencing academic or socio-emotional challenges, the faculty member(s) concerned about the student schedule a meeting with the student to discuss the concern. The student's faculty advisor is also alerted and may meet with the student as well. If required, individual faculty members or a faculty group including the faculty advisor attempt to identify possible reasons for such challenges. In collaboration with the student and the student's assigned program faculty mentor, efforts are made to identify and plan personalized intervention strategies believed to best assist the student in achieving a successful program outcome. Issue(s) of concern and plans for remediation, including timeline goals for remediation, are enumerated in a document signed by the student and the Program Coordinator/Director. This serves as a reference for all parties and as a basis for assessing improvement in the student's performance. In addition, the MSW student also have access to all student support services provided by VSU and are encouraged to seek such services.

Faculty Availability

Faculty members post their office hours next to their office doors and in the syllabus. Adjunct faculty and faculty teaching in the online MSW option and will be available to meet virtually or by phone and as posted in the syllabus. The posted hours are the best times to reach any faculty, however, faculty are often available at other times. All faculty members have voicemail, as well as e-mail addresses. This information will be found on the Department of Social Work website.

Face-to-Face Class Attendance

As a professional preparatory program, the Department of Social Work has a common attendance policy (for courses that meet face to face) which balances the necessity of class attendance with the reality of illness and unexpected events. Absences beyond the allowable limit may, without extenuating circumstances, result in a five-point reduction in the course grade for each absence.

> Allowable Absences
> Classes that meet once a week: 1
> Classes that meet twice a week: 2
> Chronic tardiness or leaving early will be counted as an absence.

Online Course Attendance

Students are expected to participate in all required instructional activities in their courses. Online courses are no different in this this regard; however, participation must be defined in a different manner. Active participation includes logging in at least twice a week at a minimum and completing course activities.

Inclement Weather and Emergency Response

Should inclemently weather result in classes being canceled information will be given to all local radio and television stations. Students can receive information concerning cancellations by listening to local stations or by signing up for the RAVE Emergency Alert System at https://www.vsu.edu/police/campus-safety/rave-emergency-alert-system.php. The institutional policy with regard to closing is that unless there are the most dire circumstances the institution will remain open for business. Students must exercise their best judgment about whether they attend class. Different conditions prevail for each individual under inclement weather situations so the decision should be essentially an independent one. If there has not been an announcement about cancellation of classes, then classes and events will be held as scheduled. Please do not call the University Police Office about cancellation notices so that office can assist with emergency needs.

Technical Requirements

Students need to have access to the following:
- A computer with high-speed internet access such as DSL or High-Speed Cable Internet.
- Compatible version of web browser for MyClasses. For PC users, Mozilla Firefox or Google Chrome is recommended. For Mac users, Safari is recommended.
  - The browser used to access MyClasses should have:
    - Java and JavaScript enabled
    - Cookies and third-party cookies enabled
    - Pop-up blockers disabled

- Clear Browser cache on a regular basis
- Microsoft Office (2013 or later), particularly Microsoft Word and PowerPoint. Discounted Microsoft software is available for VSU students through VSUstudentsHD@vsu.edu.
- Students need a copy of Adobe Acrobat to be able to be able to read items on e-Reserve and files noted as pdf within Learning Modules.
- Students' computers must also have Java installed. To make sure the latest version of Java on a PC, visit www.java.com and click on FREE JAVA DOWNLOAD. For MACs, click on the Apple Menu and choose Software Update to check for any Java updates. Java offices the ability to use the Visual Text Editor and other pertinent functions within Blackboard.
- Additional software or plug-ins may be required by instructors and students should check the Course Information in the Blackboard course.

Refer to:
VSU Technology Services

Help with Blackboard

The IT Helpdesk (Virginia State University) is prepared to handle Blackboard questions throughout the semester. Contact the IT Helpdesk at 804 524 5210 or online at VSUstudentsHD@vsu.edu.

When talking to a helpdesk consultant, students should be prepared to provide the following information via phone or email:
- Student's VSU ID/email address
- Course name and number were experiencing the problem with Blackboard
- The browser and operating system used to access Blackboard
- Identify the steps the consultant needs to take inside Blackboard to reproduce the problem.

Additional student support information, including browser configuration, tips, handouts and videos are available at:

Refer to:
VSU Blackboard

Professional Writing

Writing is an essential social work skill. The CSWE stipulates that students have the ability to demonstrate effective communication skills, both written and oral, and the NASW Code of Ethics has standards relating to the importance of accurate documentation. Virginia State University's Department of Social Work programs prepare students to enter the profession with these writing skills through requirements related to professional writing and American Psychological Association (APA) style and standards. APA is considered standard within social

science disciplines and is the basis for scholarly work created by social work professionals. The Social Work Department adheres to APA standards and this is the required format for written work submitted.

Writing /ePortfolio Studio (WEPS)

The Virginia State University Writing/ePortfolio Studio (WEPS) assist the entire VSU community, including all undergraduate and graduate students, faculty, and staff in any stage of the writing process on any writing project. The Writing Studio houses a variety of print resources: dictionaries, thesauri, technical writing guides for writing in various disciplines, and a computer lab equipped with DreamWeaver software for their use.

The Writing/e-Portfolio Studio offers one-on-one support as well as 24-hour online support for tutoring and writing services. Students are encouraged to schedule appointments to receive one-on-one support or to get oriented with the software.

> Go to:
> University Writing/ePortfolio Studio at https://www.vsu.edu/academics/services-support/writing-center.php for information.

Electronic Devices

As part of ongoing efforts to ensure the safety of the campus community, Virginia State University has implemented an emergency notification system that sends text and voice messages in the event of an emergency. In an effort to assure that students receive emergency notifications from University Police during classes, the instructor will have phone turned on in the event an emergency notification is broadcasted. If the instructor does not have a cell phone available, he/she will designate one student, who has registered their phone with University Police, to have their cell phone on "silent mode" in the event of an emergency. This does not give the student the right to accept personal calls during class time. All other cell telephones and beepers must be turned off prior to class except students on "emergency on-call" with an employer or placement, this includes texting capabilities. Students may not leave class to make or receive calls. Use of laptops during class is at the discretion of the instructor.

Campus E-mail Communication and Other
Virginia State University e-mail is the University's OFFICIAL form of communication. Failure to check VSU e-mail, errors in forwarding e-mail, and returned e-mail (from "full mailbox or unknown user" errors, for example), will not excuse a student from missing announcements or deadlines. Students should read their e-mail daily.

> **Refer to:**
> **VSU Social Media and Digital Technology Policy**

Grading
The following are grade equivalents in the MSW Program:

Grade	%	Definition	Quality Points
A	90% - 100%	Excellent	4.00
B	90% - 89%	Good	3.00
C	80% - 79%	Average	2.00
D	70% -69%	Below Average	1.00
F	Below 68.5%	Failure	0
S		Satisfactory	
P		Pass	

Virginia State University uses a four-pint grading system where points are assigned to letter grades so that "A" equals four points and a "D" equals one. A grade of "D" or "F" does not provide credit toward the MSW degree.

Incomplete grades are given only under exceptional circumstances to students whose work in a course has earned a C or better but who, because of illness or other circumstances beyond their control, have been unable to complete all the course requirements. The "I" automatically becomes an "F" if coursework is not completed prior to mid-semester of the next full semester for which the student is enrolled or at the end of one calendar year, whichever is earlier.

Drop or Withdrawal from a Class

Students receiving financial aid should contact the Financial Aid office before dropping or withdrawing to fully understand the impact on their current and future aid.

Students who officially drop from a course within the stated drop period will not have the course posted on unofficial or official transcripts. Dropped courses do not count as attempted credit. After the drop period has ended, students may officially withdraw from a course up to the published timeframe. Information regarding this period can be obtained in the Registrar's Office. The academic consequences from this action include receiving the grade of "W" for the course, which will appear on unofficial and official transcripts.

A grade of "W" will not impact a student's GPA and does not count as completed credit toward their degree. Students are responsible for dropping or withdrawing themselves. Failure to drop or withdraw in the required manner may have adverse impacts on financial aid and/or the academic grade for the course(s). Stopping payment on checks for registration fees or not paying at registration does not constitute a drop or withdrawal nor relieve a student of their financial obligation to VSU. Never attending or ceasing to attend classes does not constitute a drop or withdrawal.

Financial Assistance:

Qualified students requiring financial assistance can apply for loans, scholarships, grants and part-time employment through VSU's Office of Financial Aid. Federal guaranteed loans are available to graduate student, whether they have full-time jobs or not. The maximum loan

(currently $8,500 a year for two years) is available to full-time students. Half the amount is available to part-time graduate students who are carrying at least six hours per semester.

Virginia State University awards graduate assistantships annually to students who have demonstrated exceptional promise and achievement. These assistantships provide a yearly stipend to students.

Graduate assistants may be required to work 25 hours per week. The Application for Graduate Fellowship/Assistantship is available in the Graduate Office.

Guaranteed Student Loan Applications are obtained from the Financial Aid Office. The Financial Aid Form (FAF), also obtained from the Financial Aid Office, must be filed each year to establish eligibility for loans and work-study assistantships. Find more information, please visit the Financial Aid page on the VSU website or contact the Financial Aid Office at: (804) 524-5990 or (800) 823-7214.

Qualified students interested in applying for graduate assistantships should contact the College Dean of the program area they wish to pursue.

The Office of Sponsored Research may offer information about assistantships to graduate students whose interests correlate with the goals of research projects. Applicants should consult with the chief investigator.

Several positions as resident hall counselors are open to graduate students. Applications for these positions should be made to the Director of Residence Life and Housing.

Occasionally, graduate students may be selected for part-time jobs by offices and other non-teaching departments of the University to which graduate assistant funds do not apply. Graduate students may consult the Director of Financial Aid and/or the Director of Career Planning and Placement.

Coursework Time Limitations

All work applied to a master's degree, including transfer credits, must be completed within five calendar years after the date on which the first course-meeting-degree requirements was completed. Any course completed more than five years prior to the final completion date of all graduation requirements cannot be used toward graduation.

Life Experience

Consistent with the Council on Social Work Education's, Educational Policies and Accreditation Standards, the School of Social Work does not grant course or field credit, transfer credit, or exemptions for prior life, volunteer, or employment experience.

University Academic Standing

A graduate student who is a candidate for a degree must earn an average of 3.0 or higher in all courses applicable to his/her degree. Only course with grades of "A," "B," "C,"" "S," or "P" may be applied to semester-hours for the degree.

Students may receive no more than 2 "C's" in courses taken at the graduate level. Courses with "C" grades in excess of this number will not count toward the degree but will be figured in the total cumulative average. A prerequisite undergraduate course taken in conjunction with a graduate program must be completed with a grade of "B" or better.

Graduate students in non-degree programs are expected to meet and maintain the same academic standards as students in degree programs.

Because Virginia State University encourages a maximum of student responsibility, with a minimum of administrative regulation, it expects each student to maintain appropriate standards in his/her academic program. The University reserves the right to terminate the registration of any student who does not meet acceptable standards.

A student whose record falls below standard or otherwise indicates a lack of ability or effort needed to succeed in graduate study will be denied permission for further study.

Social Work Department Policy on Academic Standing

To remain in good academic standing MSW graduate students must maintain a cumulative grade point average of at least 3.0 for all graduate courses.

Students whose cumulative average falls below 3.0 will be placed on academic probation for a maximum of one calendar year and allowed nine graded semester hours, which includes a repeated course, to bring their grade point average to 3.0. During probation, students are dismissed if they do not improve their grade point average to at least 3.0 by the conclusion of the nine graded semester hours or one calendar year, whichever comes first. All students who return their grade point average to at least 3.0 during the probationary period will be returned to good academic standing. Students will be informed of probationary status or dismissal by the Graduate Dean or Graduate Program Chair. Non-degree students will be informed of probationary status or dismissal by the provost. MSW students on academic probation may not enter field education or placement.

In exceptional circumstances, students dismissed for academic deficiency may be considered for readmission to their graduate degree program or to another master's degree program. In no case will such readmission for graduate study be granted prior to one calendar year following the term of the dismissal. These students must submit the application for reactivation to the Registrar's Office at least 90 days prior to the term for which admission is desired.

Program Readmission

Typically, a student may apply for readmission one year following the dismissal. However, if the student is dismissed for unethical behavior, they may be considered for readmission three years following dismissal.

A student will only be considered for readmission one time

The steps for readmission are:

1. Applicant must submit both a Program Application and a current resume. If the applicant was dismissed due to falling below the GPA requirement of the Program, then the applicant should confirm their GPA meets the standard before reapplying to the Program.
2. Applicants must submit a letter to the Program Chair requesting readmission. The letter must address:
    ➢ Reasons for dismissal
    ➢ Steps taken to address the area(s) of concern
    ➢ Applicant's plan for continued academic success.
3. The applicant should supple one professional reference to the Program Chair
    • If the applicant was dismissed for falling below the GPA requirement for the Program, then the reference must be a social work academic reference.
4. The Program Chair will review all materials. After review, the Program Chair will either make a decision regarding readmission or refer the materials on to the Admissions Committee for further consideration. The student will be notified of the decision within five (5) business days of receipt of the materials.
5. If the materials are sent on to the Admissions Committee, the information will be reviewed by the Admissions Committee within ten (10) business days of submission. After review of the materials, the Admissions Committee can either make a decision regarding readmission or request a personal interview with the applicant.
6. If an interview is requested by the Admissions Committee, the interview will take place within fifteen (15) business days of submission.
7. Based upon that interview and the submitted materials the Program Chair will notify the student of the Admissions' Committee's decision in writing within five (5) business days of the interview.
8. If readmitted, the student:
    • Will be placed on program level academic probation for the first semester after readmission;
    • Will be required to develop a probationary contract with the student's social work advisor which will stipulate terms of the academic probation and consequences for non-compliance;
    • Must maintain good academic standing; and,
    • Will abide by any other conditions set by the Admissions Committee.

Policy and Procedures Concerning Academic Performance

Integrity is a principle, which permeates all the activities of the University and guides the behavior of faculty, students and staff. The principle of academic integrity is manifested in a spirit in which truth is pursued, in a process by which students learn about the concept of integrity, and in a procedure for determining individual accountability standard of integrity. The spirit of academic integrity denotes adherence to the precept that "one's work is one's own." The process by which integrity is upheld assumes clear communication of university expectations, standards, and policies and of students' and faculty's rights and responsibilities.

Academic misconduct, a breach of academic integrity, may include but is not limited to the following:

- Plagiarism —presenting as one's own work, whether literally or in paraphrase, the work of another.
- Cheating on exams, tests, and quizzes —the wrongful giving or accepting of unauthorized assistance, the giving or taking of unauthorized exam material, and/or the use of illegitimate sources of information.
- Illicit collaboration with other individuals in the completion of course assignments.
- The use of fraudulent methods or communications related to laboratory, studio, field work or computer work.
- Other acts generally recognized as dishonorable or dishonest which bear upon academic endeavors.

Procedures for handling cases of academic misconduct or listed in the university's *Student Handbook*.

The School of Social Work takes plagiarism, the unacknowledged use of other people's ideas, very seriously. The School of Social Work recognizes that plagiarism is a very serious offense and instructors make their decisions regarding sanctions accordingly.

Each of the following constitutes plagiarism:

- Turning in one's own work a paper or part of a paper that anyone other than the student wrote. This would include but is not limited to work taken from another student, from a published author or from an Internet contributor.
- Turning in a paper that includes unquoted and or undocumented passages someone else wrote.
- Including in a paper someone else's original ideas, opinions, or research results without attribution.
- Paraphrasing without attribution.
- Turning the same paper in for credit in more than one class.

A few changes in wording do not make a passage a student's property. As a precaution, if in doubt, cite the source. Moreover, if the student has gone to the trouble to investigate secondary sources, the student should give one's self credit for having done so by citing those sources into the paper and by providing a list of References or Works Cited or Works Consulted at the conclusion of the paper. In any case, failure to provide proper attribution could result in a severe penalty and is never worth the risk.

While some students may try to rationalize or justify these acts as expedient, they are wrong and there are no mitigating circumstances to excuse them. Individuals who engage in academic dishonesty damage the learning environment and their own integrity and character. If there is uncertainty or lack of clarity about what constitutes academic dishonesty, including plagiarism, please ask –ignorance is no excuse. Discovery of academic dishonesty results in stiff penalties for the offender, including a failing grade for the assignment in question and possibly a grade of F for the course. The Office of Student Affairs keeps records of plagiarism cases, and multiple

offenses could bring a penalty of expulsion from the entire VSU system. The University catalog also provides further details.

Policy and Procedures Concerning Professional Performance

Professionalism is a cornerstone of a successful academic program, just as it is a cornerstone of the responsible conduct of research, maintaining integrity and compassion in the delivery of social work services, and building a collegial and conscientious interdisciplinary professional team. Circumstances may arise during a student's course of study that call into question the capacity or commitment of the student to maintain this academic standard. Virginia State University, the College of Humanities and Social Sciences, and the Department of Social Work have the responsibility and authority to determine a student's fitness to continue in the undergraduate and graduate program of study.

Virginia State University Department of Social Work has established a policy regarding technical standards for program admission, matriculation and graduation and adopted procedures for addressing standards of ethical and professional behavior for Social Work Professional Students. The policy and procedures identify student responsibilities and rights in conjunction with standards of fairness, privacy, and due process. They are derived, in part, from the standards of conduct adopted by the Council on Social Work Education (CSWE), the National Association of Social Work (NASW) at both the national and state levels, and Virginia Board of Social Work.

In addition to the academic requirements for the MSW program, this Policy and its related procedures shall govern academic and professional behavior of Social Work Professional Students.

Policies and Policies and Procedures for Evaluating Student's Academic and Professional Performance

In preparing students for professional practice, the social work faculty takes responsibility for promoting the standards of the social work profession by continuously monitoring student *academic performance* and addressing concerns with the student through advising and grading.

In addition to academic performance, students are required to demonstrate *professional performance* skills necessary for work with clients and professional practice. Students may be evaluated for professional development during each social work major (SOWK) course through written evaluation indicating their progress in each developmental area. Students who do not meet expectations for professional performance must meet with the instructor to develop a plan to address problem areas (Step1 of the Three Steps in the Review Process). If the student continues to exhibit performance problems, the appropriate Step in the Review Process will commence. Students should be aware that the Professional Performance Review and/or the Technical Standards Violation Form will provide documentation that will be used to prompt a level review and/or develop professional references (i.e. employment, graduate school, field placement).

To ensure the integrity of the academic review process, every effort is made to provide a fair, just and expeditious review process. Academic reviews occur when issues arise regarding student academic or professional performance in the classroom or in the field. We describe below the official professional and academic review process for VSU the Department of Social Work. There are three levels (Levels I, II and III) in the review process, depending on nature and severity of the academic or professional issue.

Level 1 – Student/Instructor Consultation

When a problem is identified with student grades, professional ethics, behavior, and/or professional competencies in the classroom, the individual academic faculty member meets with the student. For issues occurring at the field placement, the field instructor and field faculty liaison/advisor meet with the student.

In many instances, meetings between faculty and students resolve the concerns and do not necessarily lead to further reviews, pursuant to this section.

Level 2 – Student/Program Performance Review

When a problem with student grades, professional ethics, behavior, and/or professional competencies in the classroom persists beyond the Level I review, the individual academic faculty meets with the student. When field placement issues persist, the assistant director of field education and the field faculty liaison/advisor meet with the student.

Level 3 – Student/School Performance Review

When a problem with student grades, professional ethics, behavior, and/or professional competencies in the classroom persists beyond the Level I review, the individual academic faculty meets with the student. When field placement issues persist, the assistant director of field education and the field faculty liaison/advisor meet with the student. In the case of field education practicum/placement review, improved performance must be demonstrated by the date specified in the Student Performance Improvement Plan (SPIP) or the student is subject to dismissal from the program. Please refer to the Field Education Manual for further details on the Field Education student review process. Conditionally admitted students who fail to meet the 3.0 GPA requirement by the end of the first semester are subject to dismissal from the program. Students placed on academic probation who fail to meet the 3.0 GPA requirement by the end of the subsequent semester are subject to dismissal from the program.

The Program Chair will inform the student of the decision(s), which can include one or more of the following actions:

- *Continue the student in the program with no conditions.*
  In these situations, the concern has been addressed and no further action by the student or program is required.
- *Establish formal conditions for the student's continuance in the program.*
  In these situations, specific conditions must be met in order for the student to remain in
the program. Action may include establishing goals, a plan, a timeline, and appropriate

monitoring; providing mentoring and support; placing the student on probation and monitoring the student during the probationary period; suspending the student for a stated period of time with criteria to return to active status to be defined; referring the student to counseling and/or advising services; allowing the student to follow a reduced course load or delay entry into the field practicum; or other conditions appropriate to the situation.

- *Consult with and/or refer to the Office of the Vice President for Student Affairs.*
  In some instances, depending on the nature of the problem, the Office of the Vice President for Student Affairs may be consulted. If a referral is made to that Office after consultation, the student will be notified in writing about the nature of the concern and the fact that the referral is taking place. Situations which may result in referral to the Office of the Vice President for Student Affairs include hazing, racial or sexual harassment, possession or use of fire arms or other weapons on university property, damage or destruction of university property, conduct that endangers the health or safety of any University student, employee, or campus visitor, or other violations of the Student Code of Conduct.
- *Dismiss the student from the program.*
  In some situations, the student will be dismissed from the social work program. The student will be provided with documentation regarding the specific reasons for their dismissal and the conditions, if any, under which they may re-apply.

In any Level 3 review, there must be adequate documentation of the problem areas as well as verification that these concerns have been discussed with the student and attempted to be ameliorated, where appropriate. Students will be notified of the decision in writing, as soon as feasible, generally within ten calendar days of the review. It is the responsibility of the Program Chair to communicate the decision to the student. A student, who is dismissed from the program following the Level 3, can appeal the process, which is outlined in the university's Student Code of Conduct. The Virginia State University Student Code of Conduct is edited and published by the Office of the Dean of Students and the Student Handbook Committee. It serves as a general source of information for Virginia State University students.

Information disclosed during student meetings with faculty, Department Chair, or school administrators will not be kept confidential if the information raises concerns about professional performance. Faculty and/or Department Chair will share pertinent information with each other for the professional purpose of identifying issues and enhancing problem solving about the concerns.

Grounds for Suspension and Dismissal

Any of the following circumstances may result in a student review (Levels I, II and III). Every effort is made through advising to discuss student termination policies and procedures in a timely manner with students prior to potential or imminent termination from the program.

Factors leading to potential or imminent termination from the program include:

Academic Performance

- Failure to maintain a grade of "B" or higher in all course work. A student whose GPA drops below a 3.0 overall will be placed on academic probation.
- Receiving more than two "C's" in any social work course.
- Earning a grade of "D" or a "F" grade in any course will initiates a withdrawal from the program.
- Student conduct (Students enrolled in the MSW Program are expected to exhibit professional behavior consistent with the NASW Code of Ethics and the VSU Student Code of Conduct.
- Student engagement in behaviors that will place themselves, the MSW Program, or Virginia State University in jeopardy will initiate a program or university response that may initiate potential or imminent termination.
- Failure to maintain program and university requirements may be grounds for dismissal from the program.

Other grounds for termination include:

Professional Performance

- Failure to meet any of the Policy and Procedures Concerning Standards for Admission, Academic Matriculation, Professional Performance and Graduation in the Virginia State University Work MSW Program.
- Failure to meet or maintain academic requirements as stated under Scholastic Performance.
- Dismissal from a field placement will generally result in a Level III review.
- Scholastic dishonesty, including cheating, lying, plagiarism, collusion, falsifying academic records, or any act designed to give unfair academic advantage to the student, faculty must adhere to university guidelines. For complete university policy and procedures, see *The Student Handbook*.
- Any threat or attempt to harm oneself or someone else.
- Commission of a criminal act during the course of study or prior admission.
- Failure to report the commission of a criminal act during the course of study or prior to admission.
- Consistent pattern of unprofessional behavior.
- Being reviewed and/or sanctioned by Student Affairs.
- Documented chemical dependence or use of illegal substances during one's course of study.
- Evidence of psychiatric or emotional difficulties that, in the professional judgment of the program faculty interfere with the student's ability to perform academically, or to a satisfactory level in the field practicum.

Procedures for Termination

- Any faculty member, including classroom instructor, Director of MSW Field Education, field instructor, field liaison, task supervisor, faculty advisor, or faculty liaison must submit in writing to the Department Chair a recommendation for terminating the student for one or more of the above identified program or university violations. When a recommendation is received, the following procedures apply:
    - The Department Chair submits the student termination request to the MSW program Academic Committee.
    - The MSW Program Academic Committee initiates and coordinates consultations with relevant parties regarding the recommendation for the student's termination. Consultations may be scheduled as one or more joint meetings with the relevant faculty, with the student, with the student and relevant faculty, faculty advisor and/or field practicum personnel
    - The MSW Academic Committee reviews the evidence to determine whether the alleged violation occurred as indicated in the compliant and assesses whether the violation(s) meets the standard of grounds for termination.
    - The MSW Academic Committee submits in writing a recommendation to the MSW Program Department Chair. The Department Chair notify the student via university official email. In addition, a copy of the letter on official university letter head is mailed to the student through the United States Postal Services. If the student is not satisfied with the outcome, the student may write a letter of appeal to the Dean of Humanities and Social Sciences.

MSW Program Academic Committee Roles

1. The MSW Academic Committee reviews the evidence in order to determine whether the alleged violation occurred and assesses whether there are grounds for termination.
2. Determines if alleged violation warrants termination from the MSW Program
3. Determines the appropriate sanction for violation.
4. Submits in writing a recommendation to the Department Chair
5. Department Chair writes a letter to the student informing him/her of the Academic Committee decision.

Students are also informed of these policies via: social work courses, syllabi, orientation meetings, and advisement.

Appeal and Grievance Process

Appeal Process

Any student terminated from the MSW Program may appeal. To initiate appeals, students must apply in writing to the Chair of the Department of Social Work, or the Dean of Humanities and Social Sciences. By conferring with the student, a resolution by mutual agreement will be sought. Failing such resolution, the dean will transmit the written appeal to the University Academic Credits Committee. The university ACC is a group organized under the auspices of Office of the Provost/VPAA. The committee is convened and facilitated by the provost or his/her designee(s). The following positions comprise the committee membership: Provost (or designee), who will serve as chair; Recorder (non-voting member designated by the provost); Registrar (or

designee); Vice President for Student Affairs (or designee); Deans of the Colleges (or their designees); four Faculty Representatives (Chair of the Faculty Senate [or designee], Chair of the Admission and Retention Subcommittee of the Faculty Senate and two faculty members at large designated by the Faculty Senate). The dispositions of ACC are the final recourse for students, i.e., students may not appeal to any other authority at the University. However, ACC decisions may be reviewed by the provost who has the authority to reconvene ACC if additional information relative to a particular case becomes available after a disposition is rendered. ACC decisions are communicated to students via letter from the Office of the Provost with copies to the student's dean and department chairperson as well as the Office of the Registrar.

Students terminated from the MSW Program are administratively withdrawn from all social work courses.

Grievance Policy

Virginia State University is committed and dedicated to fair and equal treatment of all students. Policies and procedures governing student academic and non-academic activities cover procedural resolutions of all university matters affecting its students regardless of race, color, gender, age, disability, political affiliation, national origin, religious belief or association. The Student Grievance Procedure applies to academic and non-academic student complaints, disputes or perceptions of unfair or discriminatory treatment.

Procedural due process is the means by which all matters involving students' complaints or disputes will be resolved.

An *academic grievance or complaint* is defined as a dispute between a student and a faculty member about teaching and learning activities as they relate to or affect the student in an academic environment. Complaints may include academic policies and procedures, attendance requirements, or similar issues where the student believes he/she is subjected to capricious or arbitrary treatment. Procedural due process for redress of an academic grievance is conducted in accordance with the University's Academic Policies, Procedures, and Regulations procedure.

A *non-academic grievance or complaint* is defined as a dispute between a student and a staff member, administrator, faculty member, or another VSU student concerning the application of any policies or procedures of an academic unit, administrative unit, or that are announced University wide. Such complaints include issues related to co-curricular or extra-curricular activities, Student Affairs, personal conduct or decorum, student governance, or other administrative decisions and/or actions perceived by the complainant to be unfair, arbitrary and/or capricious in nature.

It is instructed in the University Grievance Policy that students initiate an academic grievance within twenty (20) class days of the academic term following the date in which the incident occurs. Nonacademic grievances shall be initiated within ten (10) calendar days of the academic term following the date in which the incident occurs. Failure to adhere to established time lines by any principal party involved in a grievance may result in immediate termination of coverage for the complaint under the Student Grievance Procedure. The purpose of this policy is to ensure

that students and instructional faculty members are afforded due process and fair treatment when a student wishes to appeal a final course grade.

If complaints occur in the field practicum, the student is to first bring the complaint to the agency field instructor. If the problem is not resolved at that level, the student should next take the complaint to the faculty field liaison for further consultation and direction. If the complaint is not resolved with the intervention of the faculty field liaison, the student and liaison should take the complaint directly to the Director of Field Education. The Student Grievance Policy directs that students initiate an academic grievance within twenty (20) class days of the academic term following the date in which the incident occurs. Non-academic grievances must be initiated within 10 calendar days during the academic term of the date the incident occurred. If students are not satisfied with the outcome of the grievance process at the Departmental level, the student may file a written appeal with the appropriate vice president (or his/her designee), or provost within three business days following the receipt of the disposition of the grievance mentioned above.

It is recommended that a student initiate an academic grievance within 20 class days during the academic term of the date the incident occurred. Nonacademic grievances shall be initiated within 10 calendar days during the academic term of the date the incident occurred. Failure to adhere to established deadlines by any principal party involved in a grievance may result in immediate termination of the Student Grievance Procedure.

Step I (Initial): A student with a grievance or complaint shall discuss his/her grievance with the faculty or staff member or student whose action(s) or decision(s) he/she is contesting. The student shall submit a written statement to the defending party that clearly, precisely, and specifically describes the nature of the grievance and the relief or resolution desired. If the student is not satisfied with the resolution of his/her grievance at Step I, the student may proceed to Step II or consult with an appropriate advisor or counselor for assistance or guidance. (NOTE: Advisors, counselors, and attorneys for either party shall neither be present nor participate in the Step I meeting. Electronic or automated taping or recording of the Step I meeting is not permitted.)

Step II (Intermediate): If no resolution was found or if the student does not agree with the outcome of Step I, the student may file a written grievance or complaint with the faculty or staff members or student's appropriate supervisor department chair or school dean within three business days of the attempt to resolve the matter at Step I. The student's written grievance shall include the document describing the issue(s) produced for Step I. The administrative-unit supervisor shall notify each party of the date of a Step II meeting within three business days following the receipt of the written grievance. Within five business days of the notification of the parties, the administrative-unit supervisor will convene the parties in an attempt to resolve the dispute. The administrative-unit supervisor shall prepare a report on the status or disposition of the grievance and distribute the report to both parties within five business days after the meeting. (NOTE: Advisors, counselors, and attorneys for either party shall neither be present nor participate in the Step II meeting. Electronic or automated taping or recording of the Step II meeting is not permitted).

Step III (Advanced). If the student is not satisfied with the status or disposition at Step II, he/she may file a written appeal with the appropriate associate vice president, vice president (or his/her designee), or provost within three business days following the receipt of the disposition of the grievance at Step II. Within five business days of the receipt of the student's appeal, the vice president shall schedule a meeting with a Student Grievance Panel for all principal parties involved with the grievance. A Student Grievance Panel shall convene not later than 10 business days following the notification of all parties of the Student Grievance Panel hearing. The appropriate vice president (or his/her designee) or the provost shall prepare a report of the final disposition of the grievance and distribute copies of the report to the student and all other appropriate parties. (NOTE: Advisors, counselors, and attorneys for both parties are permitted to be present and participate in the Step III hearing as observers only. Electronic or automated taping or recording shall be performed, and a copy will be available to the principal parties upon request.

In any Step III review, there must be adequate documentation of the problem areas as well as verification that these concerns have been discussed with the student and attempted to be ameliorated, where appropriate. Students will be notified of the decision in writing, as soon as feasible, generally within ten calendar days of the review. It is the responsibility of the

Department Chair to communicate the decision to the student.

A student, who is dismissed from the program following the Step III, can appeal the process, which is outlined in the university's Student Code of Conduct, p. 17 and/or the General Student Appeals in the Graduate Catalog. p. 41

Final Grade Change. Once an instructor of a course has reported a grade to the Registrar, it cannot be changed except in the case of error in calculation, reporting, or recording. The instructor, Department Chair, Dean of the College Humanities and Social Sciences, Provost for Academic Affairs must approve any change made. Students who think an error in grading has been made are advised to consult with the instructor as soon as the formal grade is received. The erroneous grade must be reported to the instructor for correction during the next semester, but no later than twelve (12) months after the term in which the grade was assigned.

Grade Appeal Procedure. The purpose of this policy is to ensure students and instructional faculty members are afforded due process and fair treatment when a student wishes to appeal a social work final course grade.

Informal Discussion
o   The student discusses the course grade with the relevant instructor. Should resolution not be reached, the student moves to the next phase of the grade appeal procedure as outlined below:

Formal Appeal
o   The student files a formal, written appeal of the course grade with the Social Work Department Chair or his/her Designee. Students must file no later than the third week of classes of the fall semester to appeal spring and summer grades, no later than the third week of classes of the spring semester to appeal fall semester grades.

o In cases where the instructor whose grade is being appealed is the Department Chair, the social work faculty member of the department (other than Department Chair) who is senior in terms of university faculty assumes the duties of the Department Chair.
o Evidence is submitted to the Department Chair or designee and he/she sends one copy to the instructor within two days of its receipt. The student should keep a third copy of the completed information for the student's own records.
o The evidence submitted by the student is offered to substantiate the claim that an incorrect grade has been registered by the instructor. Such evidence might include any of the following plus other material deemed appropriate and relevant by the student:
  - Course syllabus and other written guidelines relevant to the course and assignments;
    o Evaluated written assignments and tests; □
    o Written evaluation of the student's oral or skill performance.
  - The instructor, upon receipt of the evidence, may submit any relevant documentation to substantiate the grade. A copy of the evidence is forwarded to the student within five (5) academic days of its receipt.
  - The student and the Program Chair or designee will discuss the case set forth by the student and the evidence supporting the grade appeal.
  - The Department Chair or designee will discuss the appeal with the instructor. It is the student's responsibility to show that the student has earned a grade other than that submitted to the program Chair.
  - The Department Chair or designee makes a decision based on all evidence and documentation and communicates that decision in writing to both instructor and student within three academic weeks of the date Appeal was initiated.
  - The decisions which can be made by the Department Chair or designee either to deny the appeal of the student, or with a recommendation that a three-member departmental review panel be appointed.
  - If the matter is not resolved at the departmental level, contact should be made with the Dean of the College of Humanities and Social Science to review the challenge of the student as set forth on the accompanying evidence, and to render a written recommendation.
  - If the matter is not resolved at dean's level, the student should submit a written request, containing the signatures of the chairperson and dean, to the Academic Credits Committee.

Written Complaint Procedure
When an area of the university needs improvement to better serve the needs of students, Virginia State University appreciates hearing from them. As a first step, students are encouraged to discuss their complaints directly with the person responsible for the area or problem. If the issue is not or cannot be addressed through discussion with the responsible person; and if there are methods prescribed for appeal in the applicable area in University Catalogs, Student Handbooks, or other official University documents, then the issue should be outlined in writing and submitted to the following offices in the order indicated.

Academic Complaints
   1. Department Chair
   2. Dean of the School/College
   3. Provost for Academic Affairs

Non-Academic Complaints1.
   1. Department Chair
   2. Dean of the School/College
   3. Office of Human Resources

Each office listed above will respond to the student within 10 working days of receipt of the written suggestion or complaint. If the issue is not satisfactorily resolved at the first level, the student should submit his/her request to the next highest level. If the issue remains unresolved at the highest level indicated above, these student(s) should appeal to the Office of the Provost.

Policy on Academic Standing and Program Readmission for Unethical Behavior

Typically, a student may apply for readmission one year following the dismissal. However, if the student is dismissed for unethical behavior, they may be considered for readmission three years following dismissal.

A student will only be considered for readmission one time.

Typically, a student may apply for readmission one year following the dismissal. However, if the student is dismissed for unethical behavior, they may be considered for readmission three years following dismissal. A student will only be considered for readmission one time.

The steps for readmission are:

1. Applicant must submit both a Program Application and a current resume. If the applicant was dismissed due to falling below the GPA requirement of the Program, then the applicant should confirm their GPA meets the standard before reapplying to the Program.
2. Applicant must submit a letter to the Program Chair requesting readmission. The letter must address
   ➢ Reasons for dismissal
   ➢ Steps taken to address the area(s) of concern
   ➢ Student's plan for continued academic success
3. The applicant should supply one professional reference to the Program Chair.
   a. If the applicant was dismissed for falling below the GPA requirement for the Program, then the reference must be a social work academic reference.
4. The Department Chair will review all materials. After review, the Program Chair will either make a decision regarding readmission or refer the materials on to the Admissions Committee for further consideration. The student will be notified of this decision within five (5) business days of receipt of the materials.
5. If the materials are sent on to the Admissions Committee, the information will be reviewed by the Admissions Committee within ten (10) business days of submission. After review of

the materials, the Admissions Committee can either make a decision regarding readmission or request a personal interview with the applicant.

6. If an interview is requested by the Admissions Committee, the interview will take place within fifteen (15) business days of submission.

7. Based upon that interview and the submitted materials, the Program Chair will notify the student of the Admissions Committee's decision in writing within five (5) business days of the interview.

8. If readmitted, the student:
    • will be placed on program level academic probation for the first semester after readmission;
    • will be required to develop a probationary contract with the student's social worker advisor which will stipulate terms of the academic probation and consequences for non-compliance;
    • must maintain good academic standing; and,
    • will abide by any other conditions set by the Admissions Committee.

Confidentiality

Virginia State University and the Social Work program comply with the Family Education Rights and Privacy Act of 1974, which defines the rights and protects the privacy of students with regard to their educational records. This policy is described on page 21 in the Graduate Catalog,

VI   STUDENT ORGANIZATIONS AND ACTIVITIES

The Social Work Student Organization

The purpose of the Social Work Student Organization is to afford opportunities for students to organize, participate in policies and decisions about the social work program, and participate in community organizing activities Membership is open to students majoring and minoring in social work, or students who are interested in participating in activities sponsored by the Social Work Student Organization. The Organization is driven and operates within the student affairs policies and procedures of the university. A faculty advisor is assigned to provide administrative and technical guidance, and the organization is supported by faculty as a whole. The President serves as a member of the Social Work Department Advisory Board has free voting rights. Student representatives also attends departmental and program faculty and staff meetings. The students also have full voting rights and a voice around the table.

VSU Student Chapter of the National Association of Black Social Workers

The VSU Student Chapter of the National Association of Black Social Workers (NABSW) was reactivated in the fall of 2017. The purpose of NABSW is to provide a means whereby social work students may exchange ideas, offer their services, and develop and enhance skills in the interest of the Black community, and communities at large. Students learn about the field of social work and the roles and responsibilities of social workers. The association provided an

avenue for students to impact policies and services within the department, the university and the community at large.

Phi Alpha Honor Society

The Social Work Program at VSU is a member of the Phi Alpha, a national honor society for social work. The Phi Alpha Honor Society was established in 1960 in order to recognize and promote scholastic achievement in departments of Social Work which are accredited by the Council on Social Work Education. Other objectives of Phi Alpha are to improve and further the goals of social work in the community, state, nation, and world and to recognize those professional social workers whose service and leadership are held in esteem. Social work majors are eligible for membership in their junior or senior year after achieving national and local chapter requirements. Student members meet monthly to define community-based activities to generate ideas for enhancing learning opportunities for themselves and their peers. A representative from Phi Alpha attends faculty departmental and program meetings representing the interest of peers and making recommendations for program and policy change.

Social Work Department Community Advisory Board

The Social Work Department Community Advisory Board provide support and guidance to the program. The purpose of the Board is to ensure the provision of a high quality of the undergraduate and graduate programs fostering communication between the Department and the community. Membership is comprised of social work practitioners, program directors, policy makers, field instructors, alumni, students, and consumer representatives. The Advisory Board contributions include strengthening curriculum, promoting political support, fundraising, and increasing program visibility. The president of the Social Work Student Organization serves as the student representative on the Advisory Board.

Virginia Social Work Educators Consortium (VSWEC)

This group is a consortium of the accredited social work education programs or schools in Virginia. Virginia State University is an active member of this organization. This group co-sponsor, along with the Virginia NASW, of the State Student Social Work Rally in October. This group generally exchanges information and works together to promote social work and social work education in Virginia. A student representative from VSU Social Work Department attends consortium meetings representing the interest of peers and making recommendations for academic and policy changes.

Council on Social Work Education (CSWE)   www.cswe.org

This national organization is specifically involved in social work education and serves as the accrediting body for all undergraduates and graduate programs in social work in the United States. VSU was granted full accreditation at the undergraduate level in October 2013. Social work faculty members belong to this organization and often attend the Annual Program Meeting held in October annually. Student membership is also available.

National Association of Social Workers (NASW) - www.socialworkers.org **or** www.naswva.org

The **National Association of Social Workers of Virginia** (NASW-VA) strives to assure achievement of the highest standards of Social Work practice in the Commonwealth via:

- Promoting the core professional value of belief in inherent worth and dignity of each individual.
- Endorsing and advancing a core, professional, social work identity and presence.
- Connecting, educating and defining standards to provide the tools necessary for enhancing professional practice.
- Assessing and addressing current trends and issues relevant to and affecting, the profession. Advocating and supporting public policies and legislative efforts further the profession of Social Work and embrace the diversity of human need.

NASW is a network of over 134,000 professional social workers, including almost 3,000 in the state of Virginia. You will qualify for membership in this organization once our program is an accredited social work program.

NASW in Virginia co-sponsors the annual Social Work Student Rally in October and the local Richmond –Central Chapter meets about 4-5 times a year around interesting professional topic.

NOTE: Online Students are encouraged to connect with the various organizations and participate virtually or by joining committees in the organizations that are campus-based.

Professional Development

Students are encouraged to participate in professional development activities through attendance and presentations at professional conferences, program lectures, seminars, and colloquia. Students are encouraged to become members of local, state and national social work organizations.

VII STUDENT SERVICES

Student Photo Identification Card

According to University policy, all students must possess an official VSU TrojanCard. Virginia State University TrojanCard is the official identification and security card for all Virginia State University students, faculty and staff. The TrojanCard is used to provide additional campus security for students by granting access to residential halls only to authorized individuals. The TrojanCard also reduces the need for students to carry cash and offers parents the opportunity to deposit funds on the student card to pay for necessities when they are apart. The TrojanCard can be used for purchases in two ways:

(1) For Identification: entering residence hall; eating at all VSU Dining Services facilities; admission to home athletic events; use of VSU recreation and sports facilities: admission to on-campus entertainment events

(2) For Spending: bookstore purchases; on campus convenience store purchases; library & printing services; laundry machines in Residence Halls; select campus vending machines

Trojan Dollars: Trojan Dollars is a prepaid-stored-value account that's part of your TrojanCard. It is the convenient, cashless way to pay for purchases on and off campus. The campus area's most popular businesses accept Trojan Dollars.

Book Voucher Dollars: Students will need their TrojanCard in order to obtain a Book Voucher during registration. In addition, student will be able to use Book Voucher Dollars or Trojan Dollars to purchase any item in the bookstore.

Flex (Dining) Dollars: Flex (Dining) Dollars is a stored value which is part of a purchased VSU meal plan. Flex Dollars can be used to purchase food items in the specialty dining locations on-campus (i.e., Chick-Fil-A, Subway, etc.). Unlike Trojan Dollars, Flex Dollars cannot be used at the off-campus locations.

Students are required to obtain a new card if their card is lost or stolen. Students are also required to obtain a new car if their name changes. A new card costs $25 (damaged $10) and can be purchased at the Cashier's office using cash, debit or credit, or check. If the card is purchased at the cashier's office the receipt must be brought to the card office to receive the new ID. OR if the patron has enough Trojan Dollars on the card to cover the charge, then $10/$25 can be deducted from the patron's card in the TrojanCard Office. Students should take another form of identification such as a driver's license or military ID to the Trojan Card Office, Monday–Friday, 8:30 a.m. – 4:30 p.m. in Virginia Hall, Room B10. Students may call (804) 524-5282 or email mytrojancard@vsu.edu for additional information.

Student Computer Labs
There are several Open Access Labs on campus. Open Access labs give VSU students the ability to use University computers to complete class work assignments and work on projects.
- Johnston Memorial Library, Room B25-B26 - Open 24 Hours/7 days a week
- Singleton Hall, Rooms 230, 308, and 308 – Open 8 a.m. – 7:30 p.m. Monday through Friday
- Hunter McDaniel, Room 22E – Open 8 a.m. – 5 p.m. Monday through Friday
- Engineering Building, Room 102 – Open 8 a.m. – 5 p.m. Monday through Friday

Pharos Printing Services
The Pharos printing system is a fee-based printing system that allows the students to print within the lab computers. This printing service is only available in Johnston Memorial Library and Jessie Bolling Building. The cost is .05 per black and white page and .25 per color page.

Pharos Instructions:
1. Select the document to print.
2. Go to the Pharos Print Station
3. Log into the Pharos Print Stations using your University Network credentials.
4. Select the document to print.

The Johnston Memorial Library
Constructed in 1958 and completely renovated in 2004, the James Hugo Johnston Memorial Library, located in the center of the campus, contains materials that support the mission of the

University and provides a full complement of research and information services to the University community. The library contains monographs, periodicals and newspapers, microforms, and government publications. The library is a selective depository for United States publications and receives selected Virginia government publications. The Library Media Center houses videos, CDs, audiotapes, musical scores and other media that enhance course offerings. An Assistive Technology Lab equipped with a Kurzweil machine, a Voyager Reader and large print software for the visually impaired is also available.

Library facilities include exhibit areas, conference and multimedia group study rooms, and individual and group study rooms and carrels. The library computer lab is a 24-hour complex located on the basement level near the Trojan Link Café. Wireless access and dedicated computer access is available throughout the building.

The Special Collections and University Archives Department, with a full-time archivist, is located in the Lindsay-Montague Hall. It contains historical documents, memorabilia, and artifacts, which are available to both the campus community and other researchers. The library participates in a statewide electronic resource sharing consortium, the Virtual Library of Virginia (VIVA). The library provides local and remote access to numerous databases, full- text journals and newspapers, full-text works of poetry and verse drama, and additional full-text materials, including statistical reports and pamphlets. The library supplements its collection through interlibrary loan in the Richmond Academic Library Consortium (RALC) and other resource sharing through such activities as interlibrary loan and direct borrowing by patrons. Media resources are shared through RALC's Richmond Area Media Co-op.

Each student enrolled at the university receive an identification card that also serves as the library card for borrowing materials. In addition, all students are provided library brochures that acquaint them with the facilities services, rules, and regulations governing use of the library and library materials. A How-to-Guide is also provided as guide to the efficient use of the library.

Johnston Memorial Library is ADA compliant and fully handicapped accessible.

Parking
The Parking and Traffic Enforcement Division of VSU Police Department enforces campus traffic and parking regulations, controls vehicle registration, and coordinates visitor parking for both private and common carrier vehicles. All members of the university community, including students, must register their vehicles. Vehicles must be registered with the Traffic and Parking Clerk between the hours of 8:30 a.m. and 5 p.m., Monday through Friday. Each year, on or before September 1, faculty, staff and students are required to renew their campus vehicle registration, which expires on August 31. It is the registrant's responsibility to ensure that a current year decal is affixed to his/her vehicle. Vehicle registration fees for students are $75.00 (August 1st – April 30th); $91.00 (Jan. 1st – April 30th); $34.00 (May 1st – August 31st)

Any vehicle with a University Student decal may park in a lot designated as "Student Parking". The parking lots designated as "Student Parking" are lots 2, 3, 6, 10, 13, 15B, 17, 18, 21, 23, 25, 26, 27, 28, 30, 3lA, 31M, 33, 36, and 37. If available, there is additional street parking on

Jackson Place. It is permissible for a vehicle with a faculty/staff decal to park in the student parking lots, if the need arises.

Parking fines range from $30.00 to $200.00 depending on the violation. Parking citations must be paid within five (5) business days of issuance unless the ticket is in the appeal process. Payments can be made in the Cashier's Office, Monday through Friday, between the hours of 8:30 a.m. and 4:30 p.m. Citation payments require the payment be made in certified funds (cash, money order, credit card or cashier's check). No personal checks will be accepted.
Further details regarding traffic and parking may be found by checking the Police Department Website or stopping by the Police Department. Questions regarding any aspect of police or transportation and parking services may be directed to the Chief of Police.

Food Services
Jones Dining Hall, Gateway Dining Hall and three other food venues located on campus are operated by the food service contractor. The daily hours of operation for *Jones Dining Hall* are Monday through Sunday, 7:00 a.m. – 8:30 p.m.; Gateway *Dining Hall* is opened on Monday through Thursday 11:00 am to 2:00 p.m. for lunch and 4:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. for dinner, closed on weekends. *Jones-On-The-Go* is opened on Monday through Friday from 7:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m., closed on weekends. *Starbucks* is opened on Monday through Friday, 7:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. and closed on weekends. *Chick-Fil-A* and *Subway* is located in Foster Hall and is opened on Monday through Thursday from 11:00 a.m. to 10:00 p.m. and on Fridays 11:00 a.m. to 9:00 p.m., Saturday 4:30 p.m. to 9:00 p.m. and closed on Sundays.

Services to Students with Disabilities
Embracing the university's general mission to promote and sustain academic programs in a design most responsive to the needs and endeavors of individuals and groups within its scope of influence, the Students with Disabilities Program's mission is to provide a system of support for individuals with disabilities through equal access, empowerment, support, resource, advocacy, collaboration and outreach throughout the university campus and community. The Students with Disabilities Program works closely with faculty and staff in an advisory capacity and develops reasonable accommodations as mandated by Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973 and the Americans with Disabilities Act of 1990 to allow students with disabilities to fully participate in all of the programs offered on campus.

The coordinator is designated to develop and maintain a system of services at the University for students with disabilities that will enable them to access all academic programs, services and activities. The University may not discriminate on the basis of disability. The coordinator assists the University to ensure that the programs it offers, including extracurricular activities are accessible to students with disabilities. The University can do this in a number of ways, which may include the following: Reasonable accommodations and appropriate academic adjustment support each student's academic needs shall be made on an individual basis. Academic adjustment(s) shall be made and recommended by the SWDP staff. However, essential criteria for courses, programs, services, activities and/or facilities are maintained.

Steps shall be taken to ensure that no otherwise qualified student will be excluded from participation in any programs or activities due to the absence of reasonable educational auxiliary aids. A reasonable accommodation is a modification or adjustment to a course, program, service, activity or facility that enables a qualified student with a disability to have an equal opportunity to attain the same level of performance or enjoy equal benefits and privileges as are available to similarly student without disabilities. An academic accommodation makes it possible for a student with a disability to learn the material presented and for a professor to fairly evaluate the student's understanding of the material without interference because of a disability. Examples of academic accommodations may include the following:

a) Use of interpreters, scribes, readers, and/or note-takers
b) Taped classes
c) Quiet, distraction-free environment for taking exams
d) Use of aids such as calculators
e) Use of computers in class

The Student Accessibility Office (SAO) provides services to university students who meet program guidelines. If you believe that you have a disability, you should make an appointment to discuss your needs. To become eligible for services, documentation of the disability from a qualified professional must be provided upon request. In order to receive accommodations, your disability must be on record with SOA located in Memorial Hall, 4th Floor, Room 409, (Telephone 804-2990).

Career and Employment Services

Career Services is dedicated to helping VSU students and alumni with exploring career options and empowering them to achieve their career and educational goals. Starting freshman year, Career Services provides the following resources:

- Career Research, Exploration and Assessment
- Career Advising, Planning and Preparation
- Job & Internship Opportunities
- Graduate School Admissions Process

The Career Services office partners with faculty, staff, student organizations, and University departments in providing career programs to help students obtain experiential learning and employment opportunities related to their major. In addition, Career Services provides career coaching/advising and serves as a liaison between the student and employer. The goal of Career Services is to assist students with their overall career and professional development and provide the highest quality of service and opportunities for our students, alumni, employers, faculty, staff, parents, and the community.

Social Work Bulletin Boards, Blackboard Announcements & Emails
The Department of Social Work Bulletin Boards are located in the hallways of the Department of Social Work. Students are encouraged to check the bulletin boards, their blackboard announcements and emails periodically for notifications such as workshops, conferences,

department events, career opportunities, department and social work news, course schedules and other announcements.